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Our Hour of Prayer

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By GEO. W. PHILLIPS

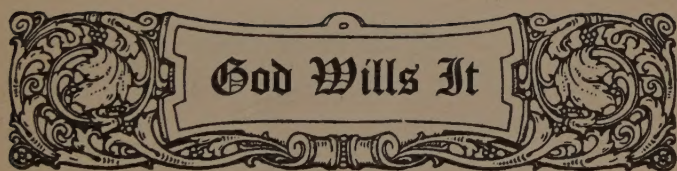




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The Hour of Prayer

KTAB

— By —

GEO. W. PHILLIPS

VOL. II

RADIO CHURCH OFFICE, KTAB

1410 Tenth Avenue

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

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OAKLAND, CALIF.

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His Face

(Suggested by Hoffman's Christ in the Sanctuary.)

Above thine altar, Lord, a light
 Illumes this sacred place;
I gaze, and through the gloom I catch
 The glory of His Face.

Dark is the world, my God, too dark
 For feeble, mortal sight.
My weary mind defeated droops
 Before the cosmic night.
But brightness beams, the midnight melts,
 And lucid now I trace
Love's everlasting purpose in
 The glory of His Face.

The sanctuary of my soul
 Is Stygian within;
And demon-forms of doubt and dread,
 Of sorrow, and of sin
Infest the shrine. My anguish swells
 To thee, great God of grace.
The Light!—The sweet Shekinah shines—
 The glory of His Face.



The Sanctuary

FOREWORD

FOREWORD

AND NOW the Hour of Prayer, Volume II is in your hands. I regret that without the Foreword to Volume I the present volume will lack depth of background. This applies almost entirely to readers outside the range of Radio KTAB. Local friends know all about the institution of The Hour of Prayer. While for lack of space I cannot repeat at length what was said in introducing Volume I, I may be permitted to describe briefly the situation as it stands at present.

KTAB is a one-thousand watt Western Electric unit, purchased and installed by the church of which I am a minister. The installation took place August 1, 1925. Soon after I was so impressed with the idea of the Hour of Prayer that, with the consent of our Board of Directors, the enterprise was launched. To describe the remarkable incidents which have transpired as a result of this ministry, would require a book in itself. For well nigh four years the work has continued with undiminished interest and potency. Each morning at nine o'clock the Hour of Prayer goes on the air.

Some twelve months ago in response to an earnest request from local listeners, I gathered together twenty-

five of these little morning addresses and published them as *The Hour of Prayer*, Volume I. The publication was rather "a bow drawn at venture"; for the cost of publication ran into thousands of dollars and the sale of the book was an uncertainty. The result, however, has been as surprising as it has been satisfactory. The entire first edition was sold in a few weeks, and a second edition is now about half distributed.

Like *The Hour of Prayer* on the radio so the printed *Hour of Prayer* is being marked by happy surprises. A travelling man sees a fellow traveller reading the book. He asks to look it over, writes of the help he has received and orders a copy for himself. A banker in Cincinnati finds a copy on the table of a friend, borrows it, takes it home, reads it through and sends an order for six to be delivered to his friends. A lady in Oklahoma visits a friend in Nebraska, finds *The Hour of Prayer* in her library, reads it, and orders a copy sent to her own home. A clergyman in Seattle writes: "*The Hour of Prayer* lies on my desk. . . . I earnestly await the coming of Volume II." A great evangelist of national prominence writes: "My time for reading is quite limited, but *The Hour of Prayer* I have read twice over and some of the little talks four times." The other day at

FOREWORD

the mid-week meeting of our church a lady came to the platform. She held a paper written in characters I could not understand. It was an Armenian paper published in France, and the issue had been mailed to her from Paris. The front page was entirely given to some one article headed with rather large type. I told her I could not read it and asked her to interpret. What was the article?

“‘Ladders of Light’
from
‘The Hour of Prayer’ ”

A missionary in Samoa writes. . . . The Y. M. C. A. in Jerusalem writes. . . . A gentleman in Wales writes. . . . And so the circle spreads.

Again “twixt hope and fear” The Hour of Prayer makes its appearance. As in Volume I, the addresses here embodied, are printed just as they were given over the radio. This fact explains the style which would otherwise, in spots at least, appear unusual. As long as God permits me life, each year a new volume of The Hour of Prayer shall make its appearance. Of course, the publication of these books will depend upon their reception by the public. When the demand for them becomes insufficient, then their ministry will be over, and their appearance cease. It is a practical certainty, however, that The Hour of Prayer, Volume

III will be off the press about November 1, 1930. A blank is enclosed in the present volume, and the Office of the Hour of Prayer will be able to decide from these as they return, whether or not this rather humble annual ministry shall continue.

From the depth of my heart I pray that in many a home throughout the world this little book will bring peace to the troubled, light to the mystified, new resolve to those whose interest flags, and that not only to our homes but to our hearts may return the daily hour of devotion.

"Lord, teach us to pray!"

As in Volume I so again the reader is directed to The Afterword. (Page 296).

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Rev. W. Phillips". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'P' and a long, sweeping underline.

I

THE MESSAGE AND THE MAN

SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah LX: 1—5

HYMN

HAIL TO THE BRIGHTNESS

HAIL TO THE brightness of Zion's glad morning!

*Joy to the lands that in darkness have lain!
Hushed be the accents of sorrow and mourning;
Zion in triumph begins her mild reign.*

Hail to the brightness of Zion's glad morning!

*Long by the prophets of Israel foretold!
Hail to the millions from bondage returning,
Gentiles and Jews the blest vision behold!*

*Lo! in the desert rich flowers are springing,
Streams ever copious are gliding along;
Loud from the mountain-tops echoes are ringing,
Wastes rise in verdure and mingle in song.*

*See, from all lands—from the isles of the ocean,—
Praise to Jehovah ascending on high;
Fallen are the engines of war and commotion,
Shouts of salvation are rending the sky.*

THE MESSAGE AND THE MAN

THE MESSAGE

O thou that bringest good tidings to Zion get thee up into the high mountain; O thou that bringest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!—ISAIAH XL:9.

ON THIS, my first meeting with you for the New Year, my unseen friends of the Fellowship of Prayer, I have purposely chosen the passage of the morning. To me it thrills with a buoyant and aggressive optimism. My own interpretation of its meaning would be something like this: Give wings to your joy! Seek the high mountain-tops from which you may fling it forth. Broadcast it to the world. The world is full of sadness. So much of life's melody is in the minor strain. The tremolo of suffering sobs so plaintively. Project your life-song in glad majors. Have you a clear note of happiness? The world needs it. Send it forth with silver trumpets. Joy! Joy! Joy! "O thou that bringest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain; O thou that bringest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!"

Aye, my friends, is there anything this world needs more than the genial atmosphere of gladness? It brings palm branches to the coasts where icebergs wedge and makes waterfalls to sing where sluggish

glaciers grind. Do I not recall how once our little home back yonder was in a sort of Arctic midnight? For months after a siege of sickness, father had been without employment. The little hoard of savings was almost gone, the needs of a numerous family were pressing and no relief appeared in sight. Weeks had passed since father had gone out upon the seemingly hopeless quest for work, when one day as we were gathering to the frugal noonday meal, Mother received a letter: News! News! Father had found a position as overseer. The effect on that poor little home was well nigh startling. It was like the passing of a total eclipse. It was a sort of ecstasy which only those who have been through a similar experience can fully appreciate.

Joy! Joy! Do you know it has even a therapeutic value? Do you know I believe one-half of our physical ailments would be relieved or disappear altogether were we upborne and swept onward by the floodtides of gladness? Do you know that once for two days I was desperately ill; nothing seemed to bring relief to the pain that gripped me like a vise; when toward the evening of the second day the finest piece of good fortune I dared to anticipate came suddenly upon me—do you know, that I was instantly and absolutely healed?

THE MESSAGE AND THE MAN

Joy! says the prophet. Don't keep it! Proclaim it! Have you good tidings for the world? Shout it forth! Give it pinions! Let it fly! It is in this temper Babcock sings:

"If any little word of mine
Can make a life the brighter,
If any little song of mine
Can make a heart the lighter,
God help me speak that little word
And take my bit of singing,
And drop it in some lonely vale
To set the echoes ringing."

Friends of the Prayer Hour, let me hope for you good news this year. May the Christmas angels not depart your sky. May Bethlehem's beauteous Star continue to light your horizon. May your homes bear lingering perfumes of frankincense and myrrh. And more than that, also, may you become God's heralds of good news. May your lives dispense the gladness of the grace of God. May that kindred scripture of the prophet apply to you: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings."

This, then is my interpretation of the meaning of our scripture: "O thou that bringest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain; O thou that bringest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy

voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid, say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!"

George Matheson, however, presents this passage in a different light. If my memory serves me correctly, a paraphrase of his interpretation would be somewhat as follows: Let your own spiritual standing be commensurate with your teaching. Let your personality be as big as your proclamation. Let not your life contradict your message. "O thou that bringest good tidings get thee up into the high mountain".

Whether or not Matheson's interpretation is correct, his principle is entirely sound. For one of the most disheartening things is to behold a life whose projected principles have won you—to behold that life itself a shrunken, shriveled disappointment. To search for some fine incarnation and find a phonograph record—or worse!

Illustrations of my meaning are, sad to say, so many and obvious that recounting one specific instance might seem almost unnecessary. Yet may I do so?

A new Protestant minister had come to a small town in Illinois. His arrival had made quite a furor in the local community and his messages drew interested audiences. Then something happened. The winter had been a hard one and fuel was an expensive

item, so that when the piles of reserve ties along the railroad tracks began to shrink, it was suspected they were being stolen for fuel. A search was instituted. The ties were found in the minister's yard. What was his defense before the community? "My individual life, my personal conduct, has nothing to do with my teaching. Have I ever taught you to steal? Has not my teaching from the pulpit been doctrinally sound? Or have I ever even remotely held up myself as an example? Be guided by my message, not by my life."

No, cries Isaiah. Let your life be the equation of your message. "O thou that bringest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain!" Let the status of your soul and the proclamation of your teachings achieve the common lofty level. Rise with your message. Get thee up!

God help us to transcend the thing we say. Great singers have I heard. They sang in heaven. They lived on earth. Terribly so! After that I cared not for the song! Sursum corda! Lift up your heart to the level of your song. Great preachers have I known. Their sermons swept the stars. Their footsteps slouched amid the fens of earth. This year, in God's name let us arise! On to the heights! On to the achievement of loftier selfhood! For God not merely to say, but for God to *be*. Not merely to declare him

but to incarnate him. Not merely to proclaim an arresting message, but to present a transcendent life. "O thou that bringest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain". Let the ambassador of heaven be worthy to proclaim to the somnolent souls of men: "Behold your God!"

O Word Incarnate, thou wast made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld thy glory. We bless thee for the gospel of thy message, but O Master, we bless thee also for the gospel of thy life. We thank thee for the divinity which resounds in every utterance of thy teaching. We thank thee for the divinity which shines through every expression of thy life. Blessed Jesus, how often we lean upon thy teaching. Again we gather with thy disciples on the mountain, by the sea, in the upper chamber. Thy word is our support. But Lord, how more often we lean upon *thee*. Thou art our support. And we thank thee thou hast said not only "Believe my word", but "Believe also in *me*".

O Christ of God transfigured on the mountain, we behold thee. It is on Hermon we exclaim, "Lord it is good for us to be here!" Master help us to be like thee. Help us to make our words flesh. Help us that in us also men may behold the Father. Lead us with thee unto the high mountain apart.

THE MESSAGE AND THE MAN

The year is before us. Make us glad and may we herald to a weary world the joy of God. Help us to be so radiant with thy gospel that we shall become positive, constructive factors in the world's great life. On to the heights may our souls ascend that from the heights we may obey thy mandate: "Lift up thy voice with strength. Lift it up. Be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God"!

AMEN.

II
COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE

SCRIPTURE READING
Revelation VII: 9—17

HYMN

ON THE MOUNTAIN'S TOP

ON THE MOUNTAIN'S top appearing,
Lo! the sacred herald stands,
Welcome news to Zion bearing,—
Zion, long in hostile lands:

Mourning captive,
God himself will loose thy bands.

Has thy night been long and mournful?
Have thy friends unfaithful proved?
Have thy foes been proud and scornful,
By thy sighs and tears unmoved?
Cease thy mourning;
Zion still is well beloved.

God, thy God, will now restore thee;
He himself appears thy Friend;
All thy foes shall flee before thee;
Here their boasts and triumphs end:
Great deliverance
Zion's King will surely send.

Enemies no more shall trouble,
All thy wrongs shall be redressed;
For thy shame thou shalt have double;
In thy Maker's favor blessed;
All thy conflicts
End in everlasting rest.

COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE

THE MESSAGE

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: that she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.—ISAIAH XL: 1, 2.

SWEET IS THE comfort after sorrow, sweet the calm that follows tempest, the rest that follows weariness. In fact is it not out of these great contrasts our profoundest appreciations arise?

Once a friend and I were taking an automobile trip from Oakland to Sacramento. We soon ran into one of the thickest fogs I have ever seen and it became heavier and heavier as we crawled along Foothill Boulevard. It was dangerous business, I tell you. Another machine would be coming ahead and you could see no light until almost the moment of possible collision. At last we turned from the Boulevard on to the Castro Valley Road. We travelled about a mile when suddenly we plunged out of the fog into a beautiful starlit atmosphere, while yonder on eastern hills the faint dawn glowed. Looking back, the wall of fog rose almost perpendicularly above us. How welcome was that dawn!

Perhaps among the lives that share this morning's prayer, is one emerging from the fogs. God bless you, my friend. God bring your soul to daybreak.

This, as some believe, was the situation described in our scripture. Either immediately or in anticipation, the prophet is addressing the weary tribes of exiled Israel. The Babylonian captivity has been upon them a galling yoke. But now the anguish is at an end. Freedom! Home! And like a clarion the seer's sweet voice resounds: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: that she hath received at the Lord's hand double for all her sins."

There are, as you see, three sources from which that great comfort springs: First, we have the comfort of an accomplished warfare.

Do you remember that dramatic day which marked the signing of the armistice between the Allied Powers and Germany? How the sirens shrieked, the whistles blew, the bands blared, the flags unfurled and the doxologies ascended! The warfare was accomplished and it was peace. Aye, brothers, many a man's heart has raised a mightier jubilation than that. Difficulties overcome, obstacles surmounted, battles won—praise God! "Comfort . . . Cry unto Jerusalem that her warfare is accomplished . . ."

Higher rose the hill before me, hotter blazed the sun as I plodded, pushing that bicycle from grade to

grade. I had had warning of this. At last a man is coming toward me. "Brother, how far is it to the top of this mountain?" Answer: "My friend, you are there right now. This *is* the top."

O Christian comrade on life's journey, dragging your burden up and up, God speak that word to you this morning. God help you to the hillcrest! "Speak ye comfortably . . ." Peace!—Peace!—Peace!

But as you notice, there is a second source of comfort: "Cry unto her that . . . her iniquity is pardoned."

From experience, I think there is no sorrow so poignant as the sorrow for sin. Bunyan with his crushing load still struggles upward to the Cross. Could you have overheard a telephone message the other night: "Mr. Phillips, you must see my husband tonight. The man is in such agony of soul I am afraid he will lose his reason." Could you have been at that interview an hour later and heard him pleading through his sobs: "O Mr. Phillips, I am afraid I have committed the unpardonable sin. Do you think God can forgive me?" Or could you have seen that young lady who came for an interview a few months ago; could you have seen her frail young life droop beneath the memory that crushed her

Wonderful assurance: "Comfort ye, comfort ye

my people saith your God. Speak ye comfortably . . . and cry . . . that . . . her iniquity is pardoned."

But there is a third source of comfort: "That she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."

A strange scripture, indeed. What does it mean? This morning at the breakfast table I put that question to my wife. "What does the scripture mean?" said she: "I think it means that God's forgiveness is twice the measure of Israel's sin." My old minister had a different interpretation. He said that the debtor's name, with the amount he owed, was posted by the creditor in the marketplace; any friend reading the name and seeing the published debt and desiring to pay it for the insolvent one, would take the scroll from the bottom, double it over so as to hide the writing and on the outside of the folded scroll, write "Paid." Thus was the "double" bestowed. A rather ingenious explanation, indeed. A widow tells me that her late husband, who was a clergyman, found here the picture of a pair of balances. In one balance were the sins of Israel, but God's mercy in the other balance was "double" the weight of Israel's sins.

Personally, I believe the passage means just what it says. Jerusalem has paid her debt with interest. She has more than expiated her guilt. She has already

filled full a double measure of suffering for all her sins.

Sin always involves suffering! There is a sense in which only God can forgive. There is another sense in which the soul that sins must endure its full meed of suffering. O conscience, conscience, who hath not felt thy scorpion scourge? Even to bleak graves thou hast driven us to weep our woe upon cold marble. Is not this the expiation of penitence? Yet, O my soul, grieve not as those without hope. God sees thy tears. God shall lift up thy head. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people saith your God!" In travail and tribulation thy captivity hath expiated. "Thine iniquity is pardoned; thou hast received at the Lord's hand double for all thy sins."

O brother, sister, friend, may this be the Father's message to you this morning. Weary mourner, lift up your head! Enough you have suffered. God knows, God sees the genuineness of your sorrow. Long enough you have struggled with the burden. Now lay it down this morning—down at Jesus' feet! Receive God's smile! Go forth with singing!

"A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." But, Father, until that broken and contrite heart comes, thou canst do little for us. Before

thou canst lift the burden we, ourselves, must feel its weight. Before thy blood can cleanse our sins our own sad hearts must bleed for them. Before we find God's way we must lose our own.

But Lord, thou knowest how hard it is sometimes for us to forget the ugly thing we so regret. The specters of past sins come back to haunt us. Clouds swept away, troop back to darken God's new dawn. Lord, deliver us from our memories. Blot out as with a thick cloud, our sins. Thou wilt "remember them no more"; help us also to forget. Re-orient our lives. Turn them now toward positive accomplishments for thee.

"Till, as each moment wafts us higher,
By every gush of pure desire,
And high-breathed hopes of joy above,
By every sacred sigh we heave,
Whole years of folly we outlive,
In his unerring sight, who measures life by love."

AMEN.

III

THE DANGER-ZONE OF MIDDLE LIFE

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm XCII

HYMN

HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION

HOW FIRM A foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in his excellent word;
What more can he say than to you he hath said,—
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

“Fear not, I am with thee; O be not dismayed!
I, I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I’ll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

“When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

“The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no never, no never forsake.”

THE DANGER-ZONE OF MIDDLE LIFE

THE MESSAGE

The destruction that wasteth at noonday.—PSALM XCI: 6.

LAST NIGHT as I read thoughtfully again, the ninety-first Psalm, there recurred to me a suggested application of the sixth verse which quite intrigued my thought. The result of my own meditation along the line suggested, I bring this morning to The Hour of Prayer.

What contrasting danger-zones of life the psalmist here presents. Glance at them for a moment as we pass:

“The terror by night.” Life’s Stygian moments spectered with shapes unknown and fearful. Forms also that infest for some, the night called Death. The psalmist says if the pinions of God overspread you, you shall not be afraid of the terror by night.

Then there is “The arrow that flieth by day”. The winged tragedy that smites with deadly effect in life’s radiant moments. Aye, how many an unguarded soul has felt the sting of the arrow that flieth by day. Says the psalmist, if you are battlemented with God, the arrows of sudden disaster shall reach you spent and harmless. You shall not be afraid of the arrow that flieth by day.

Then there is “The pestilence that walketh in darkness”: The subtle serpents that slide through life’s

somber moments: The miasmal spawn that infest life's periods of sorrow and depression. Doubt, cynicism, atheism and all. These things, says the psalmist, shall not fester in your soul. The Presence Divine shall protect you. Encircled by the sense of God you shall not be afraid of the pestilence that walketh in darkness.

Then comes our own text: "The destruction that wasteth at noonday." It gets you without camouflage. It meets you boldly and destroys you in life's very zenith hour. But the psalmist says, meet that thing with the resources of God. He that abideth under the shadow of the Almighty shall not be afraid of the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

Permit me to repeat: Every era of life has its own peculiar danger-zone. Need I remind you of the danger-zone of youth? Or of old age? Too familiar are these to need mention. But the danger-zone of middle life—this engages our present thought.

Take an illustration from our almond orchard in the country. In early February come the blossoms. Beautiful almost beyond belief! Danger then? Certainly. Frost. A life of promise withered in the bud. Pass on to September. The harvest is maturing. Danger then? Certainly. Early rains. The white

shells stained and mildewed in the humid climate of the Coast. But between—what? Well, the other day I met a friend who has an orchard in Calistoga. "How are the almonds?" "Splendid, if we survive the June drop." I found that June often leaves a shrunken harvest.

I suppose every Christian church and every Christian home knows the tragic meaning of the June drop: Life's spiritual fruitions blasted in life's heyday. God preserve us from the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

Noonday, notice, is the period of *disillusionment*. Morning is the period of poetry. Even the pendant dewdrops sparkle like pearls. Youthful fancy makes of life a fairyland. The very essence of poetry belongs to youth. And old age merges again into the poetic. Sunset and the stars! Perhaps a softer, sweeter, diviner romance. Life's vespersong. But noonday sees life stripped bare. It is white, blazing, pitiless. Harsh, untempered realism belongs to middle life. Cynicism! Have you not seen it destroying at noonday? Then have you not beheld the rainbows vanish from the horizons of many a life?

The other day a physician was describing to me the distinct eras of a woman's life. First, the bride. She is universally loved. She lives in a world of

romance. But the years roll on. The bride reaches middle life. The rainbows have gone. She becomes realistic, critical, even cynical. It is the mother-in-law period, and the very name "mother-in-law" tells its own unhappy story. But still the years roll on. The shadows lengthen. The zenith light grows softer. Evening. Once more the rainbows seek the sunset hills. And all the world loves Grandmother.

And again: Noontime is the era of *the task*. Youth dreams. Old age dreams. Middle life labors. The Christian Century once had a rather humorous article on "Finishing Schools" for young women; and I have been thinking for how many a young woman, has the marriage altar become a "finishing school." How many a young idealist soaring into the realms of vision, has afterward folded her pinions and come down to mediocrity. The girl whose boundary was the sky became a "society" matron circumscribed within the limits of her little conventional world. Yes, and for how many a young man has the office become a "finishing school". The ideals of the morning—gone! The intoxication of a divine unrest sobered down as he harnesses his life to achieve success by the methods of an established order. His, no longer to dwell in the dream world of the ideal. His, to ac-

cept the world of things as they are and live in it and "make good" in it. There—then—the world of "things as they are" has gained a recruit and Heaven has lost a prophet.

Oh the destruction that wasteth at noonday!—For noonday is also the period of *fact* rather than of faith.

Childhood has faith. Faith in fatherhood, faith in motherhood, faith in friendship, faith in prayer, faith in the church, faith in life, faith in God. But afterward:—Was it not Thomas Hood who sang so plaintively?

"I remember, I remember
The fir-trees dark and high;
I used to think their tender tops
Were close against the sky:
It was a childish ignorance,
But now 'tis little joy
To know I'm farther off from heaven
Than when I was a boy."

Middle age has seen through so many unrealities! False friendships, broken promises, insincere avowals. Middle age has torn the camouflage from life. It is impatient of sham. It applies the acid test to everything. Not faith, not fancy; it calls for fact. Here many a man's hold on God weakens. Religion is relegated as a thing of pious platitude. The reality of prayer is questioned. True, in old age I have seen that faith return bearing an olive-branch of promise plucked from God's eternal springtime. But, Oh, the

destruction that wasteth at noonday! Oh, the hours of spiritual desolation!

Enough. I have presented my thought. For this dilemma what is the cure? Abide—abide—abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Live moment by moment in the constant practice of the presence of God. Then the charm of life shall never cease, the vision never fade, and faith unfaltering shall move to meet the shadows God has draped to veil a glory far too dazzling for the frail eyes of mortal man.

Father, the morning is thine and the evening; take thou the noontide also. Temper its realisms, its wearinesses, the fury of its white heat with the shadow of thy wings. Father, look upon the business and professional men who are sharing this hour of prayer. Thou wast once very real to these men; perhaps when long ago they lisped a mother's prayer. Tomorrow thou wilt again be near and real. For it will be evening and when the shadows deepen, wistfully their eyes will seek thy stars. God of the morning and the night, be thou also the God of noon. Save us not only from the sins of youth, save us not only from the haunting fears and terrors of old age—save us, O God, from the destruction that wasteth at noonday! Look upon the mothers, the business and pro-

fessional women who share this hour of prayer. Keep them buoyant, forward-looking—faithful to God and to their finest ideals of life and for life. May their brows be haloed with the ever-enlarging glory of life's early visions.

And now, our God, the morning's prayer is over. The noonday of this day is ahead of us. Some will be sorely tempted today, some will confront the unexpected. Tonight when it is all over we shall think of thee again, and some of us shall pray. May our evening prayer not be mingled with tears of regret. Rather may we then give thanks to him who has saved us from the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

AMEN.

IV
UNFINISHED

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm CII

HYMN

SOME TIME WE'LL UNDERSTAND

*NOT NOW, but in the coming years, It may be
in the better land,
We'll read the meaning of our tears, And there, some-
time, we'll understand.*

*Then trust in God thro' all the days; Fear not, for He
doth hold thy hand;
Though dark thy way, still sing and praise, Some time,
some time, we'll understand.*

*We'll catch the broken thread again, And finish what
we here began;
Heav'n will the mysteries explain, And then, ah, then
we'll understand.*

*We'll know why clouds instead of sun Were over
many a cherished plan;
Why song has ceased when scarce begun; 'Tis there,
some time, we'll understand.*

*God knows the way, He holds the key, He guides us
with unerring hand;
Some time with tearless eyes we'll see; Yes, there,
up there, we'll understand.*

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THE MESSAGE

My purposes are broken off.—JOB XVII: 11.

ISN'T THAT the outcry of a million lives? Fallen castles, shattered dreams, vanished rainbows. In the Speaker's Bible I came across the following:

"There were buds within our garden, but they never came to flower;
There were birds among our bushes, but they only sang an hour.
And we laughed to see the swallow,
But the summer did not follow,
There were buds within our garden, but they never came to flower.

We awakened in the dawning, but we never saw the day;
We spoke our little prologue, but we never reached the play:
Oh, our love was sweet and certain,
Till grey sorrow dropped the curtain,
Ay, we wakened in the dawning, but we never saw the day."

O the unfinished tasks of life! The artist stretches the canvas upon the easel, mixes his colors and prepares to paint; but the brush falls and the picture stands unfinished. The sculptor chisels at the block of granite; but before the angel of his dream has been liberated from the stone, the chisel falls ringing at his feet and the statue stands incomplete. The poet would inscribe some passioned thought that thrills his soul, but the quill relinquished, is lying on the scroll and the last verse of the stanza fails to rhyme. And was it ever thus? Evidently. Oh how grateful we are for these flashes of human experience which flame for us out of the darkness of the distant past! Verily, this ancient sage is merely voicing the heartcry of a myriad

of frustrated modern men when he proclaims: "My purposes are broken off!"

What then think you might be the message of the Master to souls thus circumstanced? Are there such listening to this Hour of Prayer? Dare I venture to interpret for you the mind of the Master? I venture, and I pray his forgiveness if my effort fail.

First, if your life presents a broken purpose, by God's help make that fragment a classic fragment. I stood sometime ago in the Art Museum at Chicago—I stood there fascinated by the Elgin Marbles. What were they? Sad, shattered things? Verily! Shattered but immortal! Every broken fragment was a priceless fragment. They remain among the divinest treasures of the ages. Also I beheld the Venus de Milo: a broken thing; but as the ages come and the ages go, unnumbered generations will stand before that statue with awed admiration. The other night I heard a great orchestra render Schubert's Unfinished Symphony—*Unfinished!*—but what a treasure!

Your life a broken thing, my brother? Make it an immortal fragment! Some of the most treasured experiences of my life have been broken experiences: contacts with friends so soon to be sundered; but those golden moments—how treasured! Flashes of thought—momentary, and darkness again—but oh, those lumi-

U N F I N I S H E D

nous moments! Glimpses of God, and then an empty sky—but oh the memory of that vision! In this I may not be singular. Mother, perhaps it was a little child—a sunbeam that for a moment God sent into your life and then the sunbeam faded. Today the treasured experience of your life embodies those golden hours. My brother, with you it may be a broken romance of long, long ago. But there was created a shrine for your soul. God, how we thank thee for life's sacred incompletions! God, though our friendships be shattered by death or distance, make each fragment a noble thing! Our thought—our labor—our prayer—our life itself, though sad, unsatisfying fragments, yet, may the light of thy holiness suffusing them, make them to glow and glitter like splinters of diamonds!

Secondly, may I suggest that one's broken purposes may compel into expression, dormant and unsuspected potentials of development, inherent in his own life program? Strange, indeed, are the doings of that Force we are pleased to call Destiny! Let me illustrate: Three young fruit trees I had bought of a nurseryman a few springtimes ago. They were tall, thin saplings. I set them out. They grew. They flourished. Their tender limbs hung heavy with large, succulent leaves. Out there in the orchard they stood,

resembling for all the world, three open umbrellas. Then something happened: my boy's colt got away, entangled her chain around one of those young trees and snapped it off in the middle. Not a leaf remaining, only one-half the "umbrella" stick jutting out of the soil. For a while I thought to dig it out and plant another, but I noticed something that looked like a bud below the break, so I made a clean cut at the splintered end, painted it with tar, watered the stump and waited. Nigh four years have passed, and today it is the finest of the three.

Isn't that the story of many a man's life? "My purposes are broken off."—No! No! Just an obtruding portion pruned off by God that that very purpose might evolve in finer symmetry and to more abundant fruition. Gunsaulus, I am told, in his lecture on Savonarola, described that hero's early romance—a love that for him was an unrequited love. After describing how that disappointment changed the entire drift of Savonarola's career, Gunsaulus turned to the imaginary sweetheart on the platform, made a profound bow and exclaimed: "Thanks, little girl!"

If, in centuries to come, another "Gunsaulus" should lecture about you or me, might not he also be able to look back upon a broken purpose from the

wreckage of which some bigger purpose ultimately unfolded and heartily give thanks?

Third: "My purposes are broken off"—*perhaps not all*. Perhaps only seemingly so. I had heard of that great mountain. Of its spired pinnacle verdure-clad, I had been told. But when I arrived, only a truncated peak could be discerned. So the next day and the next. What then? Was the mighty mountain "broken off"? Not so! That night, while men slept, the rainclouds burst, the storm descended, torrents tumbled down the mountainsides. Then came the dawnlight sparkling clear, and lo, the mountain rising from base to pinnacle complete! It was never "broken off". It was always all there. During the dark yesterdays only the clouds obscured.

My brother, clouds are encircling thy mountain, but the summit is not broken off. "When the mists have rolled in splendor from the beauty of the hills, and the sunlight falls in gladness on the rivers and the rills"—then thou shalt smile, for through thy tears the climaxes of life for which thou hast yearned will rise to greet thee, and in that morning thy soul shall sing its glad doxology. I know, for in my own experience have I not learned? Do I not remember the day when my own chosen life-program seemed to strike the rocks? Do I not remember how the mirages

mocked me, how, like a seaman overboard I seemed to clutch at the slippery sides of the ship only to fall back and struggle in the deeps again? O friend, I know my figures are all mixed but they are not as badly mixed as I was! Bewildered I cried to my God, "O God! My purposes are broken off!" Kipling's "IF" came into my hand:

"If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the thing you gave your life to broken,
And stoop and build again with wornout tools . . .
If you can force your heart and nerve your sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so, hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them, "Hold on! . . ."

If—if—if—if—Life seemed to become a sort of perpetual subjunctive mood. God forgive me if at times in human weakness, I grew impatient. For in his own time the morning broke, the clouds were gone, the summit of an unrelinquished purpose rose on God's horizon. Shrouded—not shattered. Perhaps, my brother, this will prove to be your experience, also.

Heavenly Father, sometimes thou dost bring together again the broken currents of our lives. Thou dost divert the sundered streams around the mountain merely that they may minister to far-off spheres and come again to sweet reunion toward the golden west.

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Thus severed souls may meet beyond the years, and hopes that flew away like doves at dawn, wing back at twilight bearing olive branches, and the legions that have fought for us, though scattered for the moment, shall rally to the cause once more and bear down with banners of victory upon the forces that would trample us. O God, hast thou not bidden us "Remember my servant Moses"? We would think of him this morning. Were his purposes broken off when Egypt drove him out a vagabond to roam the hills? Remind us that not even death marks us defeated, for was it not beyond the tomb the blessed Jesus raised his paeon: "I am he that liveth; and I was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore"?

In his steps may we have faith to follow!

AMEN.

V.

WORTHY TO SUFFER

SCRIPTURE READING

I Peter II: 17—25

HYMN

BENEATH THE CROSS OF JESUS

BEENEATH THE CROSS of Jesus I fain would
take my stand,
The shadow of a mighty rock within a weary land;
A home within the wilderness, a rest upon the way,
From the burning of the noontide heat, and the
burden of the day.

Upon the cross of Jesus mine eye at times can see
The very dying form of One who suffered there
for me;
And from my smitten heart with tears two wonders
I confess,—
The wonder of His glorious love and my own
worthlessness.

I take, O cross, thy shadow for my abiding-place;
I ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of His
face;
Content to let the world go by, to know no gain or
loss,
My sinful self my only shame, my glory all the
cross.

WORTHY TO SUFFER

THE MESSAGE

And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for his name.—ACTS V: 41.

QUITE AN UNUSUAL attitude toward suffering, is it not? We associate suffering with some rather ugly things:

Sin for instance. Did you read in a recent article by Dr. Fosdick, the confession of that young woman? One of the "ultra moderns", she had been giving full rein to the passions and appetites. The night before her letter of confession, she had "gone the limit" at a wild party; and throughout the letter you could sense the anguish of a heart, feel the wild pulses of a tortured brain. In fact, it brought forcefully to one's mind words from that old revival hymn:

"Sowing the seed of a lingering pain,
Sowing the seed of a maddened brain,
Sowing the seed of a tarnished name,
Sowing the seed of eternal shame.

Gathered in time or eternity,
Sure, ah, sure will the harvest be."

Some sage or other remarked to this effect: that the great majority of mankind spend the first half of life to make the last half miserable. If that saying was true in the olden days it continues true today.

Again: We associate suffering with accident. There are lives which seem to draw to themselves so

many of the barbed arrows of fate, while others walking where the arrows fly thickest, seem to bear a charmed life. I recall a man in college. He was a well-proportioned fellow and might have earned some envied place on the football team; but disaster fell and he was struck. He lost his right leg. Bravely he bore his load and struggled on. Again disaster, and an empty sleeve hung from his left shoulder. Still with a smile he held his own in the classroom. Again the blow. This time he lost the sight of one eye. Then was he defeated? Did the white flag rise above his vanquished spirit? O my friends, when I feel the shock of untoward forces in my own life, I think back to that man and thank God for him. As I recall him one winter morning before the last tragedy befell—as I recall him moving toward Ryerson Laboratory, I think his very attitude shouted a great *Invictus*: "The bludgeoning of fate finds and shall find me unafraid I am the master of my fate! I am the captain of my soul!" Then one morning we heard of the final catastrophe. In his bedroom a defective gas valve; his poor, broken body immobile in death!

Sin, accident, error, misfortune—with such we associate suffering. Consequently, we try to escape. We strive to maintain the even tenor of our way. But here in this text we perceive a different picture. Because

of faithfulness to their mission, the apostles have been roughly handled. They have braved a hostile tribunal. Narrowly escaping with their lives, they have felt the cutting lash of the scourge and been driven out with curses. But, we are told, "they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for his name."

"And why?" we may ask. "Why this gladness in the midst of gloom? Why this joy in the midst of suffering? Why this actually esteeming it a privilege to suffer?" "Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer"—why?

Because suffering is an inevitable incident in God's program of progress. The other night, with the great engineer, Gen. Goethals' assistant in the building of the Panama Canal, I stood upon a high hill overlooking the mighty Mokelumne Dam. It was nigh to midnight. To the right of us stretched in dim, shadowy outline, the vast ravine eleven miles long where the torrents of the Mokelumne were to be impounded, and below us in a blaze of searchlights, the colossal monolith being massed between the mountains. It was, indeed, an impressive sight—the solemnity of the midnight mountains, the vast project magnificently illuminated, the construction tower hundreds of feet high,

between the steel lattice work of which swift elevators ascended to dizzy heights, from which the liquid concrete poured down by gravity, and along the lateral arms of which men were crawling like so many insects. On the mountainsides hither and yon, other gangs of men were picking away the loose soil and surface rock and cleaning off the solid underlying granite to receive the ever-descending masses of concrete. There at near midnight we stood watching that gripping panorama. It was then the conversation turned from the monolith to the men. The great engineer was speaking. "I am happy to say how small our death rate has been throughout the enterprise." And then he told me how many men had perished. Not more than about one-half so far, said he, of the estimated fatalities on a job of this magnitude. I think up to that date five men had been killed.

My friends, I looked away into the darkness of the night. For over a hundred miles city after city was strung upon that tremendous stretching pipeline. In city after city fevered lips would be cooled, gardens blossom, flowers bloom, industries kept running, and in unnumbered homes cool, sweet currents flow. Two weeks ago Oakland welcomed the coming of the Mokelumne waters. With the filling of our city reservoirs, I looked back to those lonely mountains. I

thought of those men who had given their all. Thus behind every blessing looms a cross. Always a price must be paid. The law of the atonement is as fundamental as the law of gravitation. And in the moral order, the world's choicest spirits are usually the ones who pay. "Release Barabbas unto us but let the Christ be crucified"—this seems to be the verdict of the ages. Now is the passage any clearer? "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for his name."

Again, the fact of their suffering betokened the reality of their faith. Aye, there be Christians who never suffer because they are never faithful to the point of suffering. They stop before the cross is reached. Said the writer to the Hebrews: "Ye have not yet resisted *unto blood* striving against sin."

I make the statement: It is impossible for a man to be absolutely true to his God without paying the price of suffering. We do not go with Christ to Calvary because, like Peter, we deny him on the road! Young man, young woman, mother, business man, student, workman—whoever you be, when your life begins to draw lightning, rejoice! Rejoice, I say, for then are you becoming a factor for God.

And again, these men rejoiced because they had tapped the resources of divine fellowship. How goes

that Negro chorus?—"Do you know where they crucified my Lord?" Well, do you know? Have you thought of it? Where did Jesus make his sacrifice? *Without the camp.* Outside the city walls. Cut off there in the darkness—alone. Then comes the day when we also make our sacrifice; when we also are cast out from social sympathy; when we also find ourselves in the darkness beyond the city walls. Then a sweet, soft light seems to encircle us. A Mystic Presence appears. Hush! It is the Lord! Jesus, himself draws near.

O Lord Jesus, must we go without the camp to find thee? Art thou waiting for us outside the city walls? Some of thy people have never had close and intimate contacts with thee. The sweetness of the secret of thy presence they have never learned. Master, is this because they have refused to leave the city's walls? They have craved the bright lights of the earth, the friendships of the earth, the pleasures of the earth, the honors of the earth, the plaudits of the earth, the popularities of the earth, the shallow satisfactions of the earth. Amid the revelries of life they forget the silent Presence waiting in the shadows outside of the city gates. Thus do they miss a fellowship which

WORTHY TO SUFFER

makes heaven of earth. Thus do they miss God!

Lord Jesus, have mercy upon us! We are so responsive to the lesser appeals, we are so slow to react to eternal things. O Son of Man, we call upon thee! Stir us that we may rise to the heroic! Help us to let go that we may grasp; to relinquish that we may attain; to lose that we may find!

“Go then, earthly fame and treasure,
Come disaster, scorn and pain,
In thy service pain is pleasure,
With thy favor loss is gain.
Oh 'tis not in grief to harm me,
While thy love is left to me,
Oh 'twere not in joy to charm me,
Were that joy unmixed with thee!”

AMEN.

VI.
JUSTUS

SCRIPTURE READING

Acts I: 15—26

HYMN

IF THOU BUT SUFFER GOD TO GUIDE THEE

IF THOU BUT suffer God to guide thee,
And hope in him through all thy ways,
He'll give thee strength whate'er betide thee,
And bear thee through the evil days.
Who trusts in God's unchanging love,
Builds on the Rock that can not move.

What can these anxious cares avail thee,
The never-ceasing moans and sighs?
What can it help, if thou bewail thee,
O'er each dark moment as it flies?
Our cross and trials do but press
The heavier for our bitterness.

Only be still and wait his leisure
In cheerful hope, with heart content
To take whate'er thy Father's pleasure
And all-discerning love hath sent;
No doubt our inmost wants are known
To him who chose us for his own.

JUSTUS

THE MESSAGE

And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.—ACTS I: 26

JUDAS, the betrayer, was dead, and thus had been created a tragic vacancy in the ranks of the apostles. That ugly gap must be filled at once. You see, when a minister goes bad, we make it an occasion for criticism or discouragement. The interests of the kingdom of Christ call for neither. Action! On with the constructive program of God! Every delinquent disciple leaves his relinquished burden to be assumed by the faithful. Every failure in the church places a new demand upon the resources of the remainder of the church. The Christian ranks must today produce a new apostle for a defunct Judas. It is a post of supreme responsibility and power. Who is to be the honored man? Two candidates are at last selected: Justus and Matthias. For these two the disciples proceed to cast lots, or, shall we say to cast *ballots*? Matthias is elected to the supreme office; Justus sinks out of sight, the waves of oblivion close over his head; his name is mentioned nevermore.

Justus and Matthias—these two men are with us today—always have been, ever will be. A few months ago Justus and Matthias in the form of rival candidates for the presidency of the United States awaited

the will of our Democracy. Matthias was elected, Justus faded from the picture. A prominent pulpit is vacant. The challenge of that place of power brings to the fore two splendid men of God. Whom will that congregation select? The day arrives: Matthias ascends the pulpit stairs; Justus recedes to minor fields. A great business executive is claimed by death. Who among his subordinates will helm that enterprise? Finally two names are pondered by the Board of Directors. Tomorrow morning Matthias is at the executive's private office issuing his orders, Justus sits outside obeying. Yesterday the papers portrayed the pictures of two competing candidates for the presidency of a great national women's club. Tomorrow only one woman's picture will appear. A thousand papers in America will carry that picture. The other woman's face will perhaps never again be seen on a front page. But why should I continue to make application? I might even speak of two young men, each seeking the affection of the same good woman. One wins her love. For him it is home and the beauty of a lifelong fellowship, the other fades into a memory. And so forevermore the story moves.

It is upon Justus our thought is turning this morning. I am glad nothing more is said of him. We are proud of him. We rejoice that he had the grace to

JUSTUS

Any man can shine in the blaze of victory. Only a personality inherently splendid becomes lustrous in the darkness of defeat. I think it was the first and great Von Moltke, who after his brilliant victory over Napoleon II was being heralded a hero, and who denied his worthiness for such extreme eulogy with the comment: "Ah, but remember, I have *never had to retreat.*"

That, my friends, is a crucial test. Years ago I preached a sermon in Springfield, Ohio, and at the close of the service a prominent gentleman of that city walked down the aisle, took me by the hand, and with emotion in his voice repeated the following poem which I later obtained for my files:

"God will give me strength to conquer; God will give me grace
to lose,
I am bound to fight his battles in the way that he doth choose,
Beaten down and lying vanquished, with no weapon in my hand,
I am just as much his soldier as the bravest of the band.
Dying, I still bear his colors in my oriflamme of pain,
For the conquest of the ages is the conquest of the slain.
He has filled his meed of service who but wields a broken sword,
For the sorrows of the vanquished are the glory of the Lord."

Well, then, after this, what was there left for Justus? Shall I say that Justus had *himself*? I maintain that Justus was no whit less a man after his defeat than before. He carried away with him into the smaller world of tomorrow all the resources of person-

ality he had hoped to bring as an endowment to the larger task. I maintain, have always maintained, will always maintain that the thing we are is immeasurably greater than the thing we do. Extrinsic antagonisms may destroy my life purposes, but until they destroy me, I still possess myself. I believe that in a man's own soul is the ultimate citadel wherein are massed the resources of personality, and I believe that until that citadel is shattered and the powers of personality dispersed, that man is invulnerable. Was not that the meaning of the early martyr who exclaimed: "You may burn my body, but you can't hurt me"? Let me maintain my self-respect, the integrity of my own soul, let me be able to look with unbowed head into the face of my fellowman, let me be able to look with honest eyes into the face of my God then may I accept with fortitude whatever verdict destiny may pass on my lone life.

No better illustration comes to my mind this moment than the splendid example of Charles Evans Hughes. What a man! Aspiring to the presidency but being denied the nomination he remained true as steel to his party and to his nation. Being elevated at last to become the standard bearer of his group he came within easy grasp of the great prize, and only the defection of that group itself in the state of California

barred him from the office. Was Charles Evans Hughes one whit less a man outside the executive mansion than within? I protest! Turn to the last election. Do you recall how some of his party again proposed his nomination, and how he quietly waved aside what would have been a certain election and smilingly, as it is related, passed verdict upon himself? "Too old now, gentlemen!" Above all, do you remember the part he played in the election of Herbert Hoover? To every one of his speeches broadcast over the continent I listened, and I think you will agree with me that for dignified approach to subjects of extreme delicacy, for incisive logic, for subtle irony, for judicial massing of argument, his speeches were in a class by themselves. Greater than Hughes, the President stood forth Hughes, the Man.

For Matthis may remain the glory of office; for Justus remains the glory of manhood.

Nor must we forget this other aspect: To Justus the triumph of the cause was far greater than the triumph of his own interests. The kingdom of his Lord and not his personal advancement was the supreme thing for which he strove.

You have not forgotten the launching of the Progressive Party in Chicago. You have not forgotten

how the Regular Republicans accused Theodore Roosevelt of sacrificing the interests of his party and of his country to his own personal ambition. I think the accusation was unjust. I think there have been few Americans as profoundly patriotic as Theodore Roosevelt. But such men you have seen. "Rule or ruin" is a familiar expression. The man defeated for office who forthwith launches a rival organization; the church official denied his own way, who sets about to destroy the church of God; the mother and father, who, because of the incompatibility of wills, think not of the holy institution of the home, think not of the integrity of family life, think not of the sacred trust of childhood, but shatter the institution to maintain their "rights".—Of such, examples are too sadly frequent.

For Justus we give God thanks: for men and women happy to assume some humble role if thereby God be glorified; for the disciple who loves his Master enough to step aside and make room for a more effective man; for the ambitious soul who for Jesus' sake is willing to relinquish the coveted position of leadership and step down to be lost in the crowd. To the memory of Justus we dedicate this Hour of Prayer: and to all the "Justuses", men and women, who with sweet submission bow to the will of God.

J U S T U S

Not in vain that submission, my brother, my sister.

“The man who is strong to fight his fight,
And whose will no force can daunt,
While truth is truth, and right is right,
Is the man whom the ages want.

He may fail, he may fall in grim defeat,
But he has not missed the strife,
And the temple of earth will be more sweet
For the perfume of his life.”

Father, it is enough if our place in life is that assigned by God. Yes, Master, even though a human error has been made, and the place rightfully ours has been bestowed upon another,—even then it is enough to know that God is walking with us in the sphere of humble things. Was not Jesus the “meek and lowly in heart”? Did he not with towel and cool water bathe the dusty feet of his footsore disciples? Can there indeed be a humble place if the Spirit of the Master abide therein? Lord, help us to assume *thy* yoke, to bear *thy* burden, for in the consciousness that the yoke and burden are *thine* we shall find rest unto our souls.

And Father, we pray thee to save us from self-accusation! Let us be afraid of that rather than of the unjust accusation of others. Save us from self-condemnation for that is so much worse than the curses

which fall upon us from the outside. Above all, may we be diligent to learn God's verdict. And when, like Justus, we come at last before thy throne, may we not be unworthy of the commendation: "Well done, good and faithful servant! Thou hast been faithful over a few things. I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

AMEN.

VII.
GOD WILLS IT

SCRIPTURE READING

Mark XIV: 32—42

HYMN

I WORSHIP THEE, SWEET WILL OF GOD

I WORSHIP THEE, *sweet will of God,*
And all thy ways adore;
And every day I live, I long
To love thee more and more.

I love to kiss each print where thou
Hast set thine unseen feet;
I can not fear thee, blessed will,
Thine empire is so sweet.

He always wins who sides with God,
To him no chance is lost;
God's will is sweetest to him when
It triumphs at his cost.

When obstacles and trials seem
Like prison walls to be,
I do the little I can do,
And leave the rest to thee.

GOD WILLS IT

THE MESSAGE

Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt.
—MARK XIV: 36.

WE ARE DEALING this morning with the darkest, deepest problem that confronts the Christian mind—the problem of a good God’s relation to evil. Ponder again the text that engages us: “Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt.”

“This Cup”—and a dreadful cup it was. Think of the midnight drama in Gethsemane when the very shadows shaped themselves to demon forms, and the pressure of an inward pain urged great drops from the bowed brow of that Mediatorial Man. Think of the stinging kiss of the Betrayer. Think of the rabble that dragged him into the remorseless clutch of implacable force. Think of Peter’s denial in the cruel hall of judgment. Think of the vulgar multitude that requited a life of loving sacrifice with shouts of “Crucify! Crucify!” Think of the crown of thorns, the purple robe of mock royalty, the cross, around which triumphant wretchedness frothed and foamed like spuming waves of an unstable sea. Think of the loneliness of that sacred, sinless heart that, ere it broke, sent forth

its passionate appeal to heaven: "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" "This Cup"—Injustice, suffering, loneliness, tragedy—the crumbling of a moral universe, if you will—"Take away this cup from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt."

O my friends, when the blow falls with all its terrible impact upon a human soul, more staggering than the shock itself, comes the overwhelming question: "Has God done this?—GOD?" When a few weeks ago that terrible disaster crashed into our own little home circle, friends called, friends wrote, friends telephoned. "God never did this: We tell you it is not God's doing!" In the frightful freshness of that great grief such assurances brought precious momentary comfort, yet sober second thought revealed merely a shifting of the dilemma—not its removal. Let me explain:

Suppose God did not "do this": What then? Shall we say "accident"—merely the byplay of impersonal forces? That were unbearable. My life as a child of God merely the puppet of chance? Accident? Then where was God? Shall we join the mockery of Elijah and say, perhaps he "is musing or pursuing, or on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth"? No! God is omnipresent. God was right there when it happened. Why then did not my Father raise his hand

in kindness and save us—and save us?

Well, then, suppose another says: "It was not blind chance, Doctor Phillips. It was the work of the Devil." Call it what you will, you mean some sinister and conflicting force in the universe. That also is unbearable because you have suggested that, for the moment at least, something beat down and triumphed over the power of an omnipotent God. If I hold to that then what crumb of comfort it brings, is blown away by the inrush of a more fearful apprehension; namely, that my very soul has no guaranty of safety. How can I tell but that that same sinister force will sometime snatch my soul from a protecting, but impotent God, crush it, and hurl it to eternal oblivion? Is there no Rock of Ages—no Ultimate Refuge in the universe, divinely supreme? Did Jesus Christ make an empty statement when he affirmed: "My sheep shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. . . . My Father is greater than I and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand"?

No! With a modifying statement which I shall make at the close, I cannot believe that God's will for our lives can be defeated by any cosmic force at war with God. I cannot believe that the protecting arm of Omnipotence can be beaten down by crushing blows

of superior cosmic might. Ultimately God must be omnipotent—or not God.

No! With the modification I shall make, my comfort, your comfort—the comfort supreme must be “GOD WILLS IT!” That was our Saviour’s comfort. “Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt.” God wills it: why should that be a source of comfort for our sad lives? For two reasons which faith dictates:

First, faith in God’s perfect wisdom. Oh what a difference it makes when the soul grasps that one grand, steadying thought: “God knows.” My bewildered intelligence comes to rest in the Intelligence Supreme. “Why sayest thou O Jacob my way is hid from God?”

I am going to tell you a story. The old organ in the far-off home of my boyhood had come to the asthmatic stage and for some two years Father and Mother had been saving their shillings and pounds to purchase a new instrument. At last it came and was duly installed at one end of the parlor—an ornate thing with all its pretentious array of stops mysteriously named. At family worship how its melodious tones swept out upon the quiet expanses of the warm tropical night. But something happened. The new

organ caught cold. The ivory keys and ebony stuck fast and blending melodies moved into pandemonium. Then silence descended sad and prolonged.

One day I said to Mother: "May I have the parlor to myself tomorrow morning?" She questioned but consented. Morning came. Alone and with every tool I could procure I descended upon that organ. By noon I had the whole thing arrayed in orderly disorder upon the parlor floor. By accident Mother looked in. She almost screamed. "My poor organ! What are you doing, George?" "Mother, please don't come in! Give me a chance."

In despair she left. That day I worked, and the next. Evening of the second day and it was done: the organ again assembled. Almost tremblingly my Mother's fingers sought the keys. Sweet harmonies swelled forth. With a woman's proverbial sense of logic: "Well now, why didn't you do it long ago?"

What was the trouble? Mother had had no confidence in my wisdom. Had she had faith in me, that wreckage on the parlor floor would not have caused her outcry. What am I saying? The wreckage of my life is under God's perfect control and out of the present chaos, a new and finer harmony will come sometime. God is wisdom.

Second, faith in God's perfect love. Years ago I suffered a severe automobile accident. For many long and painful weeks I lay in the hospital and operation after operation was performed first to save my life and then to save me from being crippled. One of the surgeons was a personal friend. He came to my bedside one day and informed me that just one more operation was necessary and that he and his colleagues thought it very inadvisable that I should again be anesthetized. I must nerve myself for the necessary ordeal. The memory of the next hour I can never recall without shuddering. That operating room was like a torture chamber. It was done. The new plaster cast was adjusted. A man stood mopping the cold perspiration from my forehead. I looked up. It was my friend. Teardrops stood upon his cheeks. It was love that hurt me but love also felt the pain. My friends, may I be pardoned for applying human terms to the Infinite? I believe that though God hurts us sometimes, our agony brings teardrops to the visage of God. "Jesus wept."

And now this final word, which may even seem contradictory: Because God deals with free, moral human agencies and because human wills may conflict with God's will, situations may arise quite hostile to the program of God. If not, why the prayer: "Thy

will be done as in heaven, so on earth"? Yet God's good will ultimately prevails. I mean that even these antagonisms which Providence permits are perforce completely under the sway of God and he is able to enter the adverse scheme of things and direct all to the consummation of some beneficent purpose.

As clouds heavy with rain move toward the mountains until the summits are shrouded and nothing appears but darkness, so art thou O glorious God, hidden by the earth-clouds of our sorrows. In vain we strive to find the Shape behind the tempest. Only from the bosom of the storm come the lightnings that smite, the thunders that terrify. We would hide ourselves in the cleft of the rocks, but the very tempest stands between us and the Rock of Ages. To come to thee we must plunge into the terror, for the storm seems to emerge from thee.

Master, be it so! We face the tempest for we come to thee! Let the cold winds surge about us—but we come! Let the lightnings smite us—but we come! Let the thunders break upon us—but we come! Let the torrents drench us—but we come! Let the darkness wrap around us—but we come! For beyond the storm is safety, beyond the tumult peace, beyond the terrifying clouds the blessed face of God.

Master, did not the tempest break on Jesus and beyond the blackness of Calvary came there not the resurrection morn? O bless thy name for the compensations of thy grace! Sometimes, dear Father, we journey through the tragic night merely that we may meet thee at the dawn.

God, order thou our lives though thine ordering means Gethsemane. With faith in Christ we follow through the Garden Gate. With him we bow in full submission—"Abba, Father, thy will be done!"

AMEN.

VIII.

YEARS THAT THE LOCUST HAS EATEN

SCRIPTURE READING

Joel II: 21—27

HYMN

NOTHING BUT LEAVES

NOTHING BUT LEAVES! *the spirit grieves*
Over a wasted life;
O'er sins indulged while conscience slept,
O'er vows and promises unkept,
And reaps from years of strife—
Nothing but leaves.

Nothing but leaves! no gathered sheaves
Of life's fair ripening grain;
We sow our seeds, lo! tares and weeds,
Words, idle words, for earnest deeds,
We reap with toil and pain—
Nothing but leaves.

Nothing but leaves! sad memory weaves
No veil to hide the past;
And as we trace our weary way,
Counting each lost and misspent day,
Sadly we find at last—
Nothing but leaves.

YEARS THAT THE LOCUST HAS EATEN

THE MESSAGE

I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten.—JOB. II: 25.

CAN YOU GET the picture? The winter rains have fallen, and from the softened sod the sprouts of early spring appear. Thank God for spring! With every springtime the curtain lifts and again the pageant of creation passes. So also in the sequences of human life spring plays its part and with every cradle the world's great hope is born anew. But I was saying: It is spring in the world of nature. And now the familiar sight: the plowman turning the mellow clod. With care the soil is prepared for the seed. Then comes the sowing, the germination, the sheen of verdure, the process of cultivation. The promise of the annual cycle is in that field. Hope blooms in every blade. But even now antagonisms are at work. Drought and disease attack; invading hoofs trample; hot winds scorch; and, in the picture of our text, the insect hordes invade—the "cankerworm", and the "caterpillar", and the "palmerworm", and the voracious swarms of locusts. So that at last that springtime sphere of early promise presents at autumn time a field of barren stubble.

What a picture of life's youthful years! Then how the sinister forces sweep down to destroy the fair

forecast of a soul's fruition. Alas! Alas! How many a man's early life, how many a woman's early life might be designated: "The years that the locust hath eaten"?

And they are unreturning years. Some day, friends of the Fellowship of Prayer, I may find time to put in printed form a series of Twilight Hour talks. A few months ago, you remember, I spoke about "Cancelled Checks." I told you how I have in my possession, cancelled checks running back about twenty years, how I like to commune with them, and how in them I find reflected values real and false. Among those old checks I find one given for a sewing machine. For nigh twenty years that sewing machine has been with us. It has sewed the little garments in anticipation of the cradle. It has sewed the little dresses and knickerbockers of kindergarten and early school life. It has struggled with the rough denims and corduroys of sturdy boyhood. Sometimes silks have fluttered along its "runningboard." There in the little sewing room upstairs, it stands today patiently waiting for the next call. That old check certainly produced adequate value. But others tell a different story. Here is a heavy one for an encyclopaedia seldom opened; another for a sermon filing case that now lies in the barn. Sadly I smile as those old checks slip through

my fingers and I think to myself: "Could I but reclaim the gold they represent I am certain I could now invest more wisely."

And, my friend, isn't that the picture of your life and mine? A Caesar looks out upon his finest forces shattered, slaughtered, annihilated and exclaims: "O Varus! give me back my legions." How many a soul cries with regret: "O life! give me back my years." It is impossible! Suns do not course eastward, nor rivers run toward their upland sources. Each day is a closed incident. Not even Omnipotence can reach down into the abysses of the past to snatch back the hurtling years. How then may we interpret this impossible promise: "I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten"?

Perhaps it means: "I will give you the chance of those years again."

You see, at sixteen I had an opportunity such as few boys of that day possessed. I was taken in on the "ground floor" of a business concern which has since become one of the leading enterprises of that part of the world. I missed my chance. I was in every sense a failure. That year in my life might be characterized as "the year that the locust ate." I was fired. I later came to my senses. I begged to be given another chance; but the head of that concern had had enough

of me. Then came the turning point in my life. I found Christ and, finding Christ, I found myself. Time went on. The night came when I was leaving for Philadelphia. That same man whom I had so disappointed came to me and offered me a place in his employ, which if I had been free to take, would have placed me again in the front ranks of his enterprise.

So God dealt with me. So God deals with you. Heaven knows there are few of us who do not recall the years that the locusts have eaten. We played him false. We went bad. But when in sincere contrition we brought our lives to him, did he turn his back upon us? Did he cast us out? No! If it be one remaining day I bring to my Master, for the space of that one day, the opportunities of his kingdom swing open to my life. The past is forgotten. The full program of his kingdom is again laid out before me.

We were playing a crucial baseball game in the college series. The teams were well matched, the score almost balanced; the smallest incident might change the result. Bases full. Our man at bat. One strike! Two strikes! It was that intense moment well-known to lovers of the game when a sort of anguished voice sang out: "One's enough, Taylor! Hit the ball! Win the game, Taylor!"

O my brother, whose years the locusts have eaten, do you know that even now God can turn for you a life of defeat into a life of victory? He can take what is left of your life and make of it a thing resplendent.

For is it not also true that the man who realizes that one chance is gone is more apt to grasp with intensity of zeal, his second chance? For five years in consequence of my father's death, I was kept out of college. Entering at last at the age of twenty-four, I did eight years' work in five. Why? Trying to retrieve the years which the locust had eaten. I heard of an outstanding British scholar whose phenomenal success was attributable to two lost college years. For that period a father's financial reverses compelled him from the campus. Returning two years after, his class had gone. Those two years he determined to overtake and in the effort he set a pace which carried him through all his life to heights of attainment impossible to his former easy-going attitude. Thus were restored to him in double measure the years that the locust had eaten.

And hasn't that been the secret of many a tremendous life apostleship? Tell me the secret of Saint Paul's intensity. What! Can you not tell? Go read the story of his recreant past. The secret is there. Behold this woman of the underworld breaking at the Master's feet her box of precious perfume. Why this

rich and unique oblation? The unstinted outpouring of a rescued life. Forgiven much she loved much. Thus even the consciousness of wasted years may engender a life attitude of such earnestness and devotion that personality, rising to the new challenge, may make at last its full atonement for the years that the locusts have eaten.

Look up then comrade! What locust has wrought havoc in your life? What cankerworm? What caterpillar? What palmerworm? Is it sorrow? Is it disappointment? Is it a false friendship? Is it sin? Weep not! Rouse thyself! The Master is come and calleth for thee. Now, beautiful and unstained are the years which open before thee. The Hour of Prayer passes on to thee the message of this hope: "I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten."

Kind Father, we bless thee for the new, bright morning! We thank thee for the night which drops its curtain upon yesterday and that when again the curtain rises that old scene is removed and a clean stage set for a finer drama. We thank thee that thou art more interested in our possibility than in our past. We thank thee that thou art more interested in the good we might do tomorrow than in the evil we did yesterday. We thank thee that thou art more interested in

YEARS THAT THE LOCUST HAS EATEN

the man than in the incidents of his conduct. We thank thee for the new vistas; for the fact that while our yesterdays are measured in terms of "days", our tomorrows are measured in *eternities*.

Lives there may be this morning grieving bitterly because the withered harvests mock them from the cruel fields of disappointment. Some of these may be young people; and thou knowest how poignant is the remorse of youth. Upon some the consciousness of failure or of sin may have produced a deadly inertia. Reveal to these that the gospel of Jesus is prophetic. His golden age tomorrow holds. Show them the cross this morning. Teach them the story of its precious victory fought and won for them. Even to remorseful age, reveal thou through the triumph of that cross, the promise: "I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten." In the name of Jesus Christ,

AMEN.

IX.

SPIRITUAL ARTESIANS

SCRIPTURE READING

I Thessalonians V: 9—28

HYMN

ROCK OF AGES

ROCK OF AGES, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From thy side, a healing flood,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure.

Not the labors of my hands
Can fulfill the law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and thou alone.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyelids close in death,
When I rise to worlds unknown,
See thee on thy judgment throne,—
Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.

SPIRITUAL ARTESIANS

THE MESSAGE

He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths.—PSALM LXXVIII: 15.

THE REVISED VERSION makes it even stronger. There the passage reads “abundantly as out of the depths.” That is to say, by a gracious miracle, God clave the surface rocks and produced for them artesian fountains which normally are achieved only by those who labor downward to tap the subterranean fountains hidden at tremendous depths. “He gave them drink abundantly as out of the depths.” Therefore we meditate this morning upon Spiritual Artesians—life’s deep-lying wellsprings.

Perhaps a contrast will illuminate my thought: A relative by marriage recently bought a fine piece of property in the Santa Cruz Mountains of California. Last summer when he came out from the East we dropped in to see him there, and the thing that impressed us about his property was the abundance and purity of streams which were springing up all over the place. We named his property “The Land of a Thousand Springs.” Those pure, sweet waters rose to the surface of their own accord. They created their own fountainheads, cleft their own channels. On the other hand, our small farm in Castro Valley has no surface waters. You must dig and dig deeply to find

water. At something under seventy feet you will get good water, but usually no great amount. After you have gone below that I am told, to strike the abundant streams you must go down, and down, and down—how far I don't know. Then you break into a second stratum of water-bearing rocks.

A diagram of those two levels would reveal the picture of personality. There is the shallow level of our surface resources, and the subliminal level of our profound resources. The first marks the usual expression of personality; the second marks the phenomenal expression of personality. The first marks the self the world normally perceives; the second marks the self the eye of God perceives. The first expresses the resources near at hand; the second reveals the resources hidden deep in personality. At the one level—Simon; at the other level—Peter.

Aye, and friends, when that second level is reached, then do we begin to know the meaning of self-realization. Then a man becomes dynamic. This is the most hopeful thing about men and women: namely, that there is a profound and undiscovered self which some great experience may cause to function. This is the most hopeful thing about our age: namely, that below this worthless level of what we call popular life are strata of divinity which, brought into expression would

cause the desert wastes to rejoice and blossom as the rose. Sometimes in a human life sorrow will drive into the depths, sometimes the hand of death will strike the blow, sometimes a sudden and overwhelming conviction, sometimes a great love breaks through, sometimes it is the direct action of the Spirit of God. But when it happens the world beholds a moral miracle. Then God brings to the surface the abundant fountains of the deep.

Or let us turn from personality to prayer, from the fountains deep in ourselves, to those deep in God to which we have access. O comrade hearts—you who belong to this Fellowship of Prayer, have you ever found the waters which lie in the deep? Or are you satisfied with the scanty flow of the lesser level? Two statements let me venture:—

1. That prayer may be one of the the most meaningless and unsatisfactory things in the world.
2. That prayer may become one of the most tremendous things this side of the gates of God.

Which is yours? The first is a sort of surface seepage; the second *De Profundis*. The first is the utterance of the lips; the second the outcry of the heart. Exclaims the Psalmist: "Out of the depths have

I cried unto thee, O Lord!" The first prayer reaches the ear of man; the second prayer reaches the heart of God. In one case the lips move; in the other the whole self moves.

From a nurse who worked in the home of a devout Catholic gentleman I heard this story: Upstairs he had a small chapel, perhaps the size of this Prayer Studio, and there he devoted much time to private prayer. One evening dinner being almost ready, his wife asked the nurse, "Will you please call husband? I think you will find him upstairs in the chapel." Gently she knocked: "Dinner is about ready, sir; will you come?" "Thank you, nurse, not just yet." Two or three times she ascended those stairs, and always the same gentle answer. At last his wife, herself, knockd on the door: "Husband, will you come now?" The face that greeted her at the half open door carried a strange light upon it. "Dear, would you mind having dinner without me tonight?"

O Christian heart, that's prayer! "Jesus went to the Mount of Olives." Jesus "continued all night in prayer to God." Out of that kind of prayer Methodism was born. Out of that kind of prayer the miracles of the Salvation Army were wrought. Out of that kind of prayer the Welsh Revival arose. Lord, teach us to pray! Break through the crust that im-

prisons the deeper wellsprings of the soul! Bring into radiant revelation the abysmal potencies of prayer!

Or let us turn to the Bible. For what is true of prayer is true also of the Holy Book. Those there be who have found nuggets of gold on the desert trails of Nevada, and the shining metal has mingled with the sands of California streams. Those there be who have discovered diamond pebbles on the surface soil of Africa and pearls have been gleaned from unsuspected shells. But seldom or never have cursory glances picked surface jewels from the pages of the scriptures. There God's gold has to be mined. There God's pearls lie at great depths. God's diamonds are imbedded deep. "Search the scriptures." That does not mean a cursory glance. "Delve diligently into the scriptures." Many have read the Bible for years yet have they never found a message for their own souls. Dig deep! Get down into the divine artesiains!

How well a minister knows this! While it is true that, approaching the Bible in the proper frame, and with your spiritual faculties sensitized by earnest communion with God, one may receive, and one does receive flashes of insight, yet isn't it true, that many a passage must be profoundly meditated before it yields the hidden secret it carries for your own soul? The best commentary on earth may never disclose that

message to you. God's message *for you* in that scripture may be waiting to be discovered *by you*. There is a particular shade of meaning for you which only *you* can find, because you are you—uniquely you. The world knows that passage on the surface, but God wants to bring you his artesian waters from great depths. My friends, I have a sermon that has almost invariably been used of God. The scripture from which that sermon arose I lived with for nigh three weeks before it yielded its message. I am sure there are ministers listening in this morning who have pondered a passage five days in preparation for the Lord's Day, and then suddenly upon the sixth, the fountains burst forth. Then, my brothers, you brought to your waiting congregation the abundant waters God brought to you out of the depths.

And so with the finer ministries of life. We soon discern the souls which bring us waters out of the deeps of their own lives. A member of my church who used to be a member of Dr. Truett's church tells me of the terrible thing which, during his early ministry, befell that great man. From that day his entire life was changed. Before that he gave to the world water drawn from lesser levels. After that the rocks were broken and Truett brought to the famished souls of men fountains which surged from the deeps. Oh how

many a father knows that, how many a mother. After the hand of God has smitten, the home becomes a different home; its outlook savors of the eternal, its trivial converse gains profundity, out of that home evolves the vision of Ezekiel. Clear waters gush from every threshold. Amazing! Why? Artesian fountains of the grace of God. It is God—God who has smitten and brought abundantly the waters as out from the deeper depths of being.

And Heavenly Father, we would not this morning forget the thirsty souls. Perhaps listening in is the woman popularly called the "society woman." She thought to find satiety in the surfeiting pleasures of the world. In disappointment her head is bowed this morning. Speak thou thy message to that woman. Reveal the deeper satisfaction of the spirit. Or perhaps the business man who had thought to seize life when he grasped gold. Great God, gold has been his but not happiness. Bring him thy waters from great depths. Master, it may be the suffering soul. One by one the fountains have dried up. Life has become a veritable wilderness. Strike to the deeps, O God! Bring to the barren surface of that life the undiscovered streams of thine exhaustless grace. O thou tender Christ, is it sickness? Is it regret? Is it poverty?

Is it a Christian disciple dissatisfied with the shallow experience of nominal Christianity? Or is it something which no one knows but Jesus? O Lord, transform these lives. May this Hour of Prayer bring from their hearts the song:

"I heard the voice of Jesus say, 'Behold I freely give
The living waters, thirsty one, stoop down, and drink, and live.'
I came to Jesus, and I drank of that life-giving stream.
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived, and now I live with him."

AMEN.

X.

THE COMING OF TITUS

SCRIPTURE READING

II. *Corinthians VII: 1—7*

HYMN

HOW BLEST THE SACRED TIE THAT BINDS

HOW BLEST THE *sacred tie that binds,*
In sweet communion, kindred minds!
How swift the heavenly course they run,
Whose hearts, whose faith, whose hopes, are one!

To each the soul of each how dear!
What tender love, what holy fear!
How doth the generous flame within
Refine from earth, and cleanse from sin!

Their streaming tears together flow,
For human guilt and human woe;
Their ardent prayers united rise,
Like mingling flames in sacrifice.

Nor shall the glowing flame expire,
When dimly burns frail nature's fire;
Then shall they meet in realms above,
A heaven of joy, a heaven of love.

THE COMING OF TITUS

THE MESSAGE

Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus.—II. CORINTHIANS VII: 6.

"There is ever a song somewhere, my dear;
There is ever a something sings alway:
There's the song of the lark when the skies are clear,
And the song of the thrush when the skies are gray."

YES, THERE IS always some avenue of ministry through which the Heavenly Father brings the balm of his comfort to the troubled souls of his children.

Sometimes Nature is the medium. How often when life has become a torment, when every fiber of personality is strained to utmost tension, when all the harpstrings of the soul twang in jangling discord—how often then you and I have sought the quiet of the woodlands, or leafy shade where some limpid, meandering stream made liquid melody, or the solemn shrine of the templed mountains, and there, in such environment, reestablished contact with the Infinite! How often in such surroundings the soul has experienced an inflow of mystic energy. Through such a medium God has found an ingress to the troubled soul of man.

Has it not ever been so? Look at Moses: disappointed; the roseate dreams of his youthful inexperience vanished, and himself a fugitive from the palaces of Pharaoh—look at Moses: faith in himself, faith in

mankind, faith in the future, faith in God tested to the point of breaking. Now, where do I find him? Alone in the mountain's solitude. There the very wayside bushes burned with the Shekinah and the solemn rocks spoke the name of God. Look at Elijah: his frightful reaction after the climactic victory of Carmel; look at the man who alone had faced a multitude driven into ignominious flight by the scourge of a woman's tongue; look at the man whose faith had pulled fire from the skies now beneath the juniper tree wearily praying for death. Then—what? Horeb—the cleft of the rock—nature convulsed, shaken in the grip of cosmic Omnipotence, and afterward as in the music of a mountain zephyr, conveying to his prophet soul, the still small voice of God. It is enough. Illustrations distant and immediate are too well within the range of your experience.

And then God may reach us through the ministry of preaching. Sometimes on Sunday morning when the sense of the Spirit of God has pervaded the place of worship, when pulpit and pew have been "in the spirit on the Lord's day", when the sanctuary has been thronged with worshipers—sometimes I have wished it were possible to take a picture of human souls as they entered and again as they left the house of God. Entering, the darkness of doubt; leaving, the

light of faith; weakness—strength; enmity—forgiveness; sin stained—whiter than snow; heartache—comfort; unrest—the peace of God that passeth understanding.

Sometimes God reaches us directly through the open Bible. Some have recounted strange coincidences: how they opened the great Book almost at random and how a radiant passage leaped out of it bearing from God, a special message directly meeting their immediate need. Yes, and there are those like a man I know who for months dwelt in dire spiritual darkness until one twilight, walking along a quiet country lane there came to him that passage from Isaiah: "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of the servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God." That man returned to his home with gladness in his heart. He had learned to live by faith and not by feeling. Like that man, others have received from God some providential message inscribed upon the sacred page.

Oh the media of these divine ministries! Sometimes it seems as I have watched the dawn, that with each sunrise God has thrown open the gates of heaven and sent forth upon the earth, his ministering spirits

to scatter his benedictions amid the weary multitudes of earth.

Forgive me: I have been a long time reaching Titus. We have, however, been gathering precious gems along the road. You see, Titus was the one chosen today to bear to Paul the sweetness of God's love. "Nevertheless", exclaims St. Paul, "God that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus."

Oh the clasp of a hand, the sunshine of a smile, the music of a voice stealing out amid the desert voids of a soul's spiritual desolation! A few days ago were you not reading about the tragic predicament of those Spanish trans-Atlantic fliers? Did you not shudder as you thought of that aeroplane coming down like a wounded seagull upon the dismal vast? Did you not picture them tossed and battered by the tempest as day followed day and night followed night, and with each cycling sun the frail pontoons being slowly swamped? Could you not see them scanning the horizon? Did you not share their ecstasies of hope and fear as at last—a ship! a ship! Aye, brothers, in this world of ours there are souls derelict like that! Personalities helplessly adrift amid the beating billows of disaster. They are scanning life's horizon for a sail—a sail! Do we pass them by, or by the grace of God,

have we hearts sensitive to respond to them? There is Paul! Out on his masthead flies the signal of a soul in distress. Yonder on the horizon—a sail! a sail! It is Titus! Praise God from whom all blessings flow! Titus is coming—Titus! Titus! “Nevertheless God that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus.”

And I am glad his name is specially mentioned, aren't you? Not every man can play the role of Titus. Heaven have mercy when, instead of Titus, we behold descending upon us the lugubrious procession of Job's “comforters”!

No: for the ministry, the man! Have you not read of the man who bore the message to Garcia? He was a chosen man. General Dawes is the man selected for the mission of America to Britain. Titus was the man who bore God's message of comfort to Paul. God's men are chosen men. “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” Each disciple was a man picked for a purpose. Scan the pages of the New Testament: “And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Behold I am here, Lord!” My brother are you *there* when God calls? Pardon the parenthesis. Ananias, go down the street called Straight. I am sending you to Saul,

the persecutor. Ananias, you are the man chosen to get him off the rocks. Again, "And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip saying, Arise and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza . . ." There is a man journeying in a chariot, but his soul is on a spiritual pilgrimage. Philip, you have I chosen for the Ethiopian ministry. "And he arose and went!" Of all the ministries of God, is not that through man, the sweetest, tenderest, and most precious?

And we, dear Lord—what have we done? In vain hast thou been calling us to some fine personal task? Perhaps not a city's block from us is someone our consciousness of God may illuminate, whose clouds of sorrow the sunshine of our lives may dissipate, someone upon whose hopeless horizon we may emblazon a morning star. Dear God, are we ready? Dare we venture to declare: "Here am I, Lord, send me"?

Perhaps Master, the one to whom thou would'st send us is very near to us—within our very home circle: a mother whose load would be lighter for a little bit of love; a father whose tired footsteps on the threshold would gain a new resiliency if only he could feel that the boy for whom he labors loves him; an old grandmother it may be who is very lonely in

this new, strange world. Perhaps, a little fire of life's early zest would glow if daughter could retrace the steps with her and speak with her anon of those far years of spring. Perhaps it is just a tired and discouraged servant girl, whose attic room has become for her a sort of solitary cell.

Father, we so often think of thy ministries in terms of magnitudes. Help us to discern thy greatness in small things. Help us to see that the God of the countless hosts of heaven, is the God of the dewdrop; that the God of the mighty movements of history, is also the God of the kindly word, the generous deed, the unselfish thought. Therefore, Master, may we go forth today so reflecting thy good spirit that when the evening shadows fall, someone with grateful memory will give God thanks for the coming of Titus.

AMEN.

XI.

THE DAYS WE DON'T FORGET

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm XC.

HYMN

SOMETIMES A LIGHT SURPRISES

*SOMETIMES A LIGHT surprises
The Christian while he sings;
It is the Lord, who rises
With healing in his wings:
When comforts are declining,
He grants the soul again
A season of clear shining
To cheer it after rain.*

*In holy contemplation,
We sweetly then pursue
The theme of God's salvation,
And find it ever new.
Set free from present sorrow,
We cheerfully can say,
Let the unknown to-morrow
Bring with it what it may.
It can bring with it nothing
But he will bear us through;
Who gives the lilies clothing
Will clothe his people too.
Beneath the spreading heavens,
No creature but is fed;
And he who feeds the ravens
Will give his children bread.*

THE DAYS WE DON'T FORGET

THE MESSAGE

In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying,—HAGGAI II: 10.

AND HE MADE record of it. He remembered the year, the month, the day and the circumstances surrounding the experience. He made record, I say; and he passed that record into history. "In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying . . ."

Life's Undying Days—how shall I name them?

Days of memory. I recall a course in Ancient History. In that course we followed again the forgotten footsteps of the founders of civilization. There were names—strange names—a veritable catalog of them. There were dates—a ranging row of mile-posts, reaching from the shadowy ranges of the unrecorded up to the sloping summit of the Christian dawn. There were events, and events and inter-related events—a perfect labyrinth of them. There were mazes of inter-mingling tribal and racial movements, and fusions out of which the present races of men arose. One day the class was particularly dull and the professor not in the best of moods. He put a question to one of us concerning some ancient celebrity and the student answered in a very uncertain

manner. The professor in despair placed the open text book downward on his desk, turned to the student and put the question: "Mr. Smith, if you can't remember this lesson, not a day old, how much of this course are you going to remember twenty years hence?"

Not "twenty"; more nearly thirty years have passed, and how much of that course today is clear in my mind? The general perspective is there and outstanding in the midst of that perspective a few lasting impressions: Carthage, Actium, Alexander of Macedon, Marathon, Thermopolae, Xerxes, Cyrus, the thrusts and parries between Babylonia and Assyria, an obelisk, a pyramid, far away a streak of the Ganges and beyond the Himalayas, yellow masses moving in the dusk. Only in spots is recollection vivid. So much of the remainder is dim and uncertain.

And thus it is in our own life's story. Oh the days—the days—the days in endless sequence! Look back: how much of the detail can you recall? Yes, there is the perspective running clear back to childhood, and while in that perspective a myriad days are forgotten, yet here and there stand forth in bold relief *The Days We Don't Forget*. Days that seem defiant of the obscurization of time. Days whose events stand forth in sharp detail, vivid after forty years. "In the

four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius,"—then!

Or, to vary the illustration: A year and a half ago I stood at the stern of one of the United Fruit Company's steamships looking back upon the Blue Mountain Range. We were sailing away from Kingston toward Cristobal and there was tenderness in my heart as I watched the receding picture of that beautiful island. At first in the clear light of the tropical afternoon the detail of each contour of the mountains was discernable. Even the foothills were separately marked. But as the day waned and the distance lengthened, hill merged into hill, the lines of each separate detail were wiped out, the whole picture became homogeneous, and at sunset only one ultimate vision remained: the superlative Blue Mountain Peak.

Perhaps, friends of the Fellowship of Prayer, when twilight comes, some lofty pinnacle of experience will continue to hold our vision until the dark descends and slumber settles on us.

Again: these Undying Days are often periods when personality moves on lofty levels.

Under what conditions will you take the measure of a man? Personality does not always present the same aspect. One does not permanently remain at maximum. Our tides of self-expression rise and fall;

and believe me, you will find, as a rule, it is the *big man* who rises to meet the big experience; it is the *great soul* that functions in life's great days. Happy Haggai! We are glad you were ready to rise to the mandate of your God when "in the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius," God spoke.

Again I ask: Under what conditions will you take the measure of a man? Last year I visited our friends, the Schafhirts at their summer home in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Over the bluff in front of their cottage flowed the great American River. I confess that on that July day there wasn't anything "great" about the river—nothing great except the channel. The waters had shrunken to become a mountain stream. Why should that stream monopolize so great a channel? But look: upon the higher rocks were watermarks. Yon high watermark registered the river's winter flow. Today at its source its currents were being drained to satisfy a myriad demands. This residuum—do not measure the magnitude of the American River by this! . . . We left the summer cottage. Autumn came and winter. The stalwart pines of the mountains bent beneath the weight of accumulated snows. Early in the spring our friends had occasion to make a trip to their cottage and found the

river brimming its banks. *This*—not *that*—is the American River! Now take your measurements!

The biggest man has his small moments. Don't measure him at his meanest. At your best you have realized your true self. When you have realized yourself—then you *are* yourself. And no finer periods of self-realization than those dynamic moments when personality arises to the challenge of some great appeal. Happy Haggai! Today thou art a prophet! The big day has produced the big man!

Also these Undying Days leave their imprint upon the very texture of the soul. Jacob becomes Israel. Hoshea becomes Joshua, Simon becomes Peter. These are days of crisis.

Human lives are like highways: some are always winding into new situations. They are full of turns, each one of which presents a different scene. Changes—changes—changes all the time. Other lives are uneventful. Year after year they hold the even tenor of their way. One day I asked a woman whose life was sequestered: "What news today?" "News!" she exclaimed in mild surprise. "This is not the place to seek for news. Nothing ever happens here!" Aye, but some day something will happen. Something sometime happens everywhere. By the home of my childhood was a lane we used to call "Long Lane." It

was only a mile long, but in that mountainous region it seemed interminable. The longest stretch of unbending highway I ever saw was in the desert. How far it reached before a turn, I cannot tell. Next to that is one familiar to all of us Californians: the stretch of highway running from the end of the Ridge Route into Bakersfield. Straight as an arrow for some twenty-five miles. *But then the road turns.*

However uneventful the stretches of human life, sometime comes the turning point and when that turning point is reached a point is fixed from which we measure life "before" and "after." Never again can a man be quite the same. Never again does life to him present the same aspect. For better or worse, he is a changed man.

I pray God that into these crises of ours may steal the sense of God. I pray God that these epochs may be revelatory of himself. Whatever the crucial experience, may that experience so articulate God that we also shall avow the certainty of Haggai: "In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord saying"

We thank thee, Master, for the vistas of memory.
We thank thee for the days, yes, and for the nights

THE DAYS WE DON'T FORGET

in which thou hast spoken to us. We thank thee that many a man has struggled through the night of anguish to the morning, and in the morning, has taken the stony pillow of his pain and with it upreared an altar to the name of God. Above all we thank thee for the day thy mercy found us at the Cross.

“Oh happy day that fixed my choice
On thee, my Saviour and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad.
Happy day! Happy day!
When Jesus washed my sins away.”

Then it was—supremely then—old things did pass away and the new self was born.

Master, give us strength that life may be sustained upon these higher levels. What a tendency there is to drift back into mediocrity! Keep vividly before us that “in the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius”—God did speak. That “after six days” Jesus taketh Peter and James and John and was transfigured before them. That “in the year that King Uzziah died” Isaiah saw the Lord. That “when the day of Pentecost was fully come” men were baptized with fire. That just as really thou hast made impact on each of our lives. O God, maintain us at the level of our great experiences, and thus may thy name be glorified in us.

AMEN.

XII.

LIMITING THE ILLIMITABLE

SCRIPTURE READING

John XV: 9—16

HYMN

WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS

*WHAT A FRIEND we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!*

*What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!*

*O, what peace we often forfeit,
O, what needless pain we bear,*

*All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer!*

Have we trials and temptations?

Is there trouble anywhere?

We should never be discouraged,

Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Can we find a Friend so faithful,

Who will all our sorrows share?

Jesus knows our every weakness,

Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden,

Cumbered with a load of care?

Precious Saviour, still our refuge,—

Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?

Take it to the Lord in prayer;

In his arms he'll take and shield thee;

Thou wilt find a solace there.

LIMITING THE ILLIMITABLE

THE MESSAGE

Yea they limited the Holy One of Israel —PSALMS: LXXVII: 41.

SETTING a limit to God! That savors of the paradoxical. More logical were we to set a limit to the sunshine or to the air we breathe, or to the all-pervasive ether.

The removal of limitations, the widening of circumferences mark the beauty and sincerity of friendship. When I take the circle which surrounds my life and separates me from my friend and throw it around him also so that my circle embraces him, then have we both come to share the common ground of mutual interests.

Two pictures let me bring you: One from a suburb of Chicago, where, when I visited, I observed a perfect array of "spite fences". Those fences separated not only home from home but heart from heart. Another picture from an Ohio city street. It was residential and it must have been more than half a mile long. The old brick pavements had been taken up and a fine cement walk constructed. Then the fences between all the houses were one by one removed, and you looked at lawn blending into lawn and garden into garden in one peaceful perspective. That told its own story of community neighborliness. O brothers,

let us take down the fences which separate us from each other and from our God, until life presents a united perspective, reaching out into horizons and beyond, until the highways of earth merge into the streets of gold, and our human habitations mingle with the mansions of the blest.

When I was a boy the Salvation Army used to sing two songs on our streets. One of those songs was feminine, the other masculine. The feminine song described a lassie with a "modest little hat". She told how many things she was willing to do for the Army. She would visit the sick, observe "self-denial week", beat a tambourine, and do a lot of other things I don't remember. "But when it comes to the *bonnet* I draw the line at that." Then the masculine refrain resounded. He would "like to be a Commissioner and help to boss the show." He wouldn't be ashamed even to beat the big bass drum on the street corner. "But when it comes to *tobacco* I draw the line at that."

Forgive me for seeming to be trivial, but where do *we* draw the line with God? For most of us, like those described in the scripture have "limited the Holy One of Israel."

Some limit God in the matter of their worldly pleasures. They live their lives with two crowds and those crowds don't mingle. They remind me of a

British official at home. He belonged to a certain fraternal order and to this order belonged another man very much lower in the social scale. One day the second man met him in a public lobby and greeted him as "brother". The official turned upon his heel with the curt comment: "We will limit such terms to the lodge rooms, sir!" Those there be who would lock their Lord Christ within the cold and lonely confines of an empty church and keep him there. There is to be no warm, vital contact between the Christ and their social interests. They have "limited the Holy One of Israel."

Some limit God in the matter of their financial affairs. They "don't mix business with religion." (So much the worse for the business!) I have known men who have left with tender heart and moist cheek the sanctuary of prayer, and tomorrow gone out to the office to be hard, grasping, unscrupulous. Men I have known who would think nothing of buying a four thousand dollar car, driving across the continent on a vacation, perhaps deciding there to take a trip to Europe, spending thousands of dollars, enjoying the best of everything, and yet when the kingdom of Christ presented some superlative appeal, gave hardly more than some humble working man. Living in mansions they left their Master in a manger. Thus have they

“limited the Holy One of Israel.”

But we may limit God even in our sorrows. For he calls us to share our heartaches with him. Walking with us, he pleads that we lay upon his shoulder a portion of the load that crushes. Stealing softly within our shrines of suffering he waits to share the secret of our pain. Do you know there are men who, like Simon, the Cyrenian, are willing to bear the Cross of Christ, but who, when *their* Golgotha moments come, will not permit the infinite love of Christ to help them carry their crosses? Again and again have come to me fragments of that poem which used to hang in my Mother’s room:

“Bearing thy burden alone, my child,
Sending away thy Friend,
Dost thou not think I can help thee, child?
Cannot I succor lend?
Only just tell me thy greatest grief,
Whisper thy hidden care,
Even the telling will bring relief,
Giving thee less to bear.”

Yes, there are those—some I know this very morning—whose hearts are quite bitter against God. Upon the somber, draped portals of their lonely house of suffering the Son of Man stands knocking patiently. Yet the door is closed. They have “limited the Holy One of Israel.”

And most of us limit God in the matter of our prayers. Friends, I am convinced we need to re-dis-

cover the dynamic of prayer. We have crippled the pinions of the soul. Prayer with Jesus, and prayer in the teachings of Jesus, knew no limits but one, and that solitary limit the Will of God. "Abba, Father, *all things are possible with thee!*" Lord, teach us to pray!

Circumstances often bring out certain scriptures in bold relief. While attending the Northern Baptist Convention at Denver in June of this year, I was invited to address a union service at the college town of Boulder, Colorado. Boulder is located about thirty miles from Denver and at six-thirty o'clock that Sunday evening, the minister's wife was waiting at my hotel to take me in her car. That drive will long be remembered. Earth and sky conspired to achieve at once beauty and sublimity. Imagine driving at sunset upon a highway flanked on the west by the majestic Rocky Mountains whose snow-crowned summits blazed with the crimson glory of the setting sun! Do you know, those mighty, ponderous masses looming there against the western sky, seemed to have written across them in letters of golden light: "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove! . . . "

But the mountains remain: The mountains of sin, of paganism, of spiritual indifference, of godless mater-

ialism, of industrial injustice, of international conflict. Why? We dare not grapple with them seriously, vicariously, agonizingly, believably in prayer. Our prayers are too small. I tell you the measure of the magnitude of your prayer is the equation of the magnitude of your faith in God. The character of your prayer is the sure reflection of your vision of God, and the range of your prayer, the measure of your concept of the purposes of God. O my comrades, pray largely! Limit not the illimitable! Stagger not at God's promises! Stagger at the weakness of your own spiritual confidences. Limit not the Holy One of Israel!

I have said enough. My morning's message is over. But will you do something for me? Will you open your Bibles, turn to Romans, chapter eight, verse thirty-two, and mark the passage? It reads thus:

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Lord, increase our faith! Are we limiting thy love? Unveil thy cross. Are we limiting thy power? Let us behold the unnumbered stars of heaven—

"Forever singing as they shine,
The Hand that made us is divine!"

L I M I T I N G T H E I L L I M I T A B L E

Do we limit thy glory? Point us to the crimson sunset, or a ruby rosebud in its emerald sheath, or a fallen leaf of autumn, or thy traceries upon a shell we trampled on the shore. Do we limit thy wisdom? God, open our blind eyes! Show us the scheme which moves from electron to infinity, from grains of sand to organized civilizations and from star dust to archangel's trump. "From everlasting unto everlasting thou art God!"

Father, we rejoice that thou art very great. Our petitions today must involve large requests, for the tasks confronting us are staggering. God, look at our world, its heavy materialism, its rebellious atheism, its unblushing and unbridled passion, its sad, sad prayerlessness. Master, who can turn the tide? Who is sufficient for these things? O teach us that our sufficiency is in God. God can turn the tide. Lord, teach us to pray! Teach us to pray largely. Teach us not to limit the Holy One of Israel! Give us grace to become mediatorial men—spiritual points of contact between heaven and earth, so that through us the power of God may reach the souls of men.

AMEN.

XIII.

THE DAILY CROSS

SCRIPTURE READING

Mark X: 35—45

HYMN

WHEN I SURVEY

*WHEN I SURVEY the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.*

*Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ, my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.*

*See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?*

*Were all the realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

THE DAILY CROSS

THE MESSAGE

And take up his cross daily, and follow me.—LUKE IX: 23.

WHAT A TREMENDOUS difference in the aspect of a scripture the bringing into focus of a single word will make. "And take up his cross *daily*"—that emphasis changes things.

When Jesus spoke about the cross, the disciples then present might regard his sayings in two aspects: First, the literal. In those bloody days the cross was a terrible reality. It was at once a thing of agony and shame. Today what we behold is the transfigured cross. The touch of Christ has made of it a sacred symbol. But for the disciples it epitomized all tragedy.

The second aspect of the cross to those disciples, as to us, was, I suppose, figurative. It described the suffering that might be expected to come as a normal result of faithfulness to the Master's cause.

Even today that cross remains, and some of us can cite instances of wealth surrendered, social positions relinquished, friendships forfeited, loves severed because of the integrity of a determined discipleship. Such incidents punctuate the lives of all true Christians. But in the passage of the morning is presented a unique aspect of the cross—the continuous cross—the "daily" cross.

Let me explain: I have probably mentioned an automobile trip from Seattle to Oakland. It was very enjoyable driving through those green forests of pine and skirting those northern ranches where the summer grain was slowly ripening, and now and then winding your way along the rocky hillsides which buttressed the banks of some fine river. At a turn in the highway a sign came sharply into view:

"Look Out! At the Next Turn Mt. Lassen to the Left!"

And there it was: a fine picture of that snow-crowned volcano rising in the distant east. We continued the journey hour after hour. Now and then we looked back as for some last glimpse. Then came the end and at last the picture faded and was gone.

Sometimes for you and me a more tragic mountain looms in sight. An unexpected turn on the highway of life and Mount Calvary confronts us. Aye, comrade heart, you know! But the journey continues. The years slip by, and that particular "Calvary" we leave behind us, a crimson memory painted on some far horizon. Not *that* does the Lord describe. It is the Calvary that follows us! It is the Calvary that never leaves the picture but haunts us to the journey's end. "Take up thy cross *daily* and follow me."

When I was a boy a paper came to our cottage telling of a man who had been sentenced to life imprisonment. The thought almost horrified me. I said to Mother, "Why didn't the poor man beg the judge to place some limit on his sentence—ten years or twenty, or fifty, or even a hundred?" and Mother asked, did I expect to live a hundred years? "No," I said, "but at least I should know there was a limit somewhere, and beyond that limit—freedom." Did you get my thought? A cross co-eval with a life. At the Hour of Prayer we have spoken of the life vision, the life ideal, the life labor and even the life prayer. Today we are speaking of the life cross.

You bear through the weary day and when you go to rest it leans beside your couch. Awaken at dawn and there it is. The morning may be full of sunshine, or the morning may be overcast and the eves drip rain. But the cross is there. A morning rich with friendly contacts perhaps; under the home-roof have slept dear ones you have longed to see. Smiling faces are awaiting you today. Or perhaps the dawn is one of loneliness. You move toward a solitary day. But the cross is there. Or pleasures impend, or disaster, or sickness, or the cold grave. But the cross is there. You know the meaning of the mandate: "Take up the cross *daily* and follow me."

Perhaps my sister, your daily cross is in the home. It is the place of discord. Your Christian life knows no comradeship. Husband is hostile to your Lord. A hidden Bible you must read in secret. Never must he see you on your knees. Did he drop in this morning, with an oath he would tell you, "Turn off that radio!" The Sabbaths you yearn to spend at the house of God, you must perforce spend with him amid scenes in which you take no pleasure. And you have prayed—Oh how you have prayed for him! But still his heart is flint.—Aye, for you it is the daily cross!

Or perhaps the daily cross is sickness. I have been reading again this morning some of the tender poems of that dear sufferer, Anna Johnson Flint. The other day I received a picture of her seated in her wheel chair on the lawn of an eastern hospital. Her poor wrists twisted with inflammatory rheumatism so recalled my own brother's. At eight years, sickness. No, it would be merely temporary. Youth was in his favor. Good medicine, fresh air, sunshine, wholesome food—perhaps the baths, the seashore and all would be well. But months came and went. Year followed year. He was now a boy of twelve. Slowly the conviction settled like a shadowing, impenetrable cloud. The cross was to be a life cross. Twelve years more of suffering. At last crushed by the cross, he fell before the Palace

Gates. Then—angels bore the cross away. Then—God lifted him. God clasped him to his bosom. The palace gates swung open; they closed and we saw him no more.

Or memory perhaps provides thy daily cross. The torture of the unreturning. In the spring come back the birds to build again their broken nests, and the swallows glide again beneath our skies, and again the timorous leaves bud from the branches. But not for you. For you in vain the heart's unanswered pleading:

"O for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still."

For you only the memory of what comes not again.

Sometime ago I conducted a funeral at the beautiful cemetery of an adjoining city. And "beautiful" it was. In fact, our cities' loveliest spots are usually their cemeteries. Slums belong to the living, little children. Green lawns and flowers and cool fountains to the unresponding dead. Let not this parenthesis, however, detract from what I am about to tell you. The funeral service in question was over and I was standing with the manager of the institution, at the door of the chapel, when we saw an elderly man walking with bowed head toward a distant grave. The sight inspired my companion to tell me the story. He told me of

one who long, long years before brought his young wife to that place of silence—and since that day every day, sunshine or rain, bearing flowers, he had come to stand beside her grave. He was now growing old, but yet he came and would come until others brought him at last and laid him to sleep beside her.

The Daily Cross—how many of you, my comrades, know the daily cross? Even this morning are you facing the road with it as you did yesterday and the day before and the day before? Pause, comrade soul! Look ahead of you. Can you recognize footprints? Not alone you are. A while since your Master passed this way. You follow in his steps today. And his steps are leading you to Light. I read again his word: “Take up his cross daily and follow me”—*And Follow Me!*

For those who must bear the daily cross, Great God, we pray. Some shrink from that daily cross, some shudder, some rebel, and some altogether refuse the sacred burden. But we thank thee for those gentle and surrendered spirits who uncomplainingly and oft in secret move on the painful pilgrimage. As they go they sing; but sometimes the note of pain is in their song; and spotless white their pilgrim garments; but

THE DAILY CROSS

sometimes we glimpse thereon a stain of crimson! Sturdily they move along; but now and then we note a limping step. For these, thy hero souls, we thank thee, God; these are they who mark out for lesser men the way of life.

May our faith in thy good will be so unwavering that we also shall avow with hearts submissive:

"O cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to hide from thee:
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be."

AMEN.

XIV.
SELF-DISCOVERY

SCRIPTURE READING

I. Samuel X: 1—12

HYMN

SPIRIT OF GOD DESCEND UPON MY HEART

*SPIRIT OF GOD, descend upon my heart;
Wean it from earth, through all its pulses move;
Stoop to my weakness, mighty as thou art,
And make me love Thee as I ought to love.*

*I ask no dream, no prophet ecstasies,
No sudden rending of the veil of clay,
No angel visitant, no opening skies;
But take the dimness of my soul away.*

*Hast Thou not bid us love Thee, God and King?
All, all Thine own, soul, heart, and strength and
mind;*

*I see Thy cross—there teach my heart to cling:
Oh, let me seek Thee, and oh, let me find.*

*Teach me to feel that Thou art always nigh;
Teach me the struggles of the soul to bear,
To check the rising doubt, the rebel sigh;
Teach me the patience of unanswered prayer.*

*Teach me to love Thee as Thine angels love,—
One holy passion filling all my frame;
The kindling of the Heaven-descended Dove,
My heart an altar, and Thy love the flame.*

SELF-DISCOVERY

THE MESSAGE

And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets? Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets?—I. SAMUEL X: 11—12.

AND SO IT became a proverb, did it? An incident must certainly strike a universal chord when it is snatched away from its local setting and reappears in proverbial form. Because it was vibrant with human experience "therefore it became a proverb: Is Saul also among the prophets?"

Here then was a commonplace life which momentarily arose to remarkable and unsuspected levels. You never would have thought such faculties lay dormant in the man. "Is Saul also among the prophets?" Wonderful indeed to consider that the lowliest life may possess startling though unevoked potentials!

Thank God for this phenomenon of self-discovery! Sometimes it comes about as part in common of a great social movement. A man's life is caught up and borne upon the crest of some spiritual surge that sweeps the social order. There are rhythmic movements in society, and sometimes, as I believe it is today, the spiritual tide is at its ebb. These are periods when even great souls descend to small things;

when even mighty mystics fold their pinions and walk. The other day my wife and I were driving along the Coast Route to Los Angeles. At a turn in the road we came upon a great bridge spanning high banks. As we drove upon it my wife looked over and remarked: "Well, here is the bridge, and there is the channel, but where is the river?" As a matter of fact, vegetation was growing in the deep bottom. That question might be asked today by a stranger beholding our Christian institutions. Beautiful and numerous churches, great organs, splendid choirs, highly trained preachers, all sorts of machinery, yet, oh the absence of the divine inflowing! "Here indeed is the channel, but where is the river?" At such times even prophets are impotent, preachers lose their power, and the great evangel stammers forth incoherently from unimpassioned lips.

But, conversely, there are periods when the spiritual life rises to mighty flood. Do you recall the last Mississippi overflow? Not only in Louisiana did the deluge present a spectacle, but even as I travelled through Illinois and neighboring states I was impressed to observe little insignificant streams swelling to the magnitude of rivers. Every tiny brooklet seemed to have found its voice. Each became part of a common movement speeding in the same direction.

My brothers, there are spiritual impulses that sweep society like that. Pentecosts! More than once in my own life I have been caught up in the onward surge of the power of God as it swept society. Then spiritual forces are released. Even small men become great, limping souls unfold pinions of prayer. Then I have been to religious services and heard for the first time the dumb speak, so that one also echoed the surprise of the proverb: "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

Sometimes self-discovery comes at the evocation of a great cause. Something strikes the rock and the sealed-up waters gush forth. Verily, no man knows what is in him until something happens to stir the deeps within. Then like the Chambered Nautilus we close up the idle door, quest for new habitations, and know the old no more.

So it has been in my own experience. Ever the new man has arisen at the challenge of a new situation. I thank God for the tasks too big for me which I have had perforce to grapple with and accomplish. I thank God for the mountains too high for me which I was compelled to surmount. . . . Young man, here is a good rule to follow: assume a job just too big for you, and then pull yourself up to its level. Take from the hands of God some overwhelming mission he presents, then call upon your total resources and meet it. Was

it not so with Saul? This country boy has been called to be a king. Then listen to the promise he receives. You may read it in the sixth verse of the chapter: "And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy . . . *and shalt be turned into another man.*"

And have not others, like Saul, at the challenge of some great emotion been turned into other men? Shall I present the classic example of that early American patriot? A youth dissipated, purposeless, shiftless, vagrant. Then flames the American Revolution. Behold him now, transfigured with a sacred passion, rising to heights of vehement eloquence: "As for me, give me liberty or give me death!" Thrilled, men asked each other in awed whispers: "Did he have it in him?—this man?" Aye, and there are other men and women who have it in them only nothing has happened to call it forth. We have slumbering patriots, and slumbering saints, and slumbering prophets, and slumbering evangelists. In our own time have we not heard the voice of an engineer rise in high prophetic utterance so that again the proverb was applied: "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

Or take our own Lincoln: had the crisis never arisen neither would Lincoln, as the world beholds the man, ever have arisen. It was the great historical epoch

that created him. Iconoclasts are writing about the great man, recounting incidents that reveal a lesser soul. Suppose these incidents are true: they are the expressions of the lesser Lincoln. A colossal crisis created a colossal man. Catch the keynote of his Gettysburg speech and proclaim the marvel of this man of lowly origins! Might not Wendell Phillips' somewhat sarcastic question be paraphrased: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" And friends, there are epochal prayers that gush out of our sorrows, there are spiritual passions that flame out of our sense of social wrong, there are ecstatic utterances which spring out of us in response to the presence of some great sublimity, there are startling heroisms which, counting no cost, risk all at a crisis. Then the unsuspected self arises and functions so tremendously that again from lip to lip the proverb passes: "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

Sometimes self-discovery is consummated by mystic contact with God. Let me read again the verse of the morning: "And it came to pass, when all that knew him before time saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"

"What is this that is come unto the son of Kish?"
—The same question might have been asked of Isaiah

after his vision of the Eternal; and of Paul after his Damascus road experience; and of Whitefield after his great conversion; and of Mary Magdalene after her penitence in the house of Simon; and of Finney after his prayer in the woods. "What is this that has come upon the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" This, my brothers, my sisters, is the spiritual miracle of the Christian ages: That God is able to take the weak, and make of their weakness, strength; to take the blasphemous and make their blasphemies into prayers; to take the souls sin-stained and clothe them with garments of sanctity; to take lives cursed with selfishness and transform them into prodigies of self-sacrifice, to bring from mediocre men utterances of such eternal weight that men pause with the question of awe and surprise: "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

Spirit of God, thy coming changes things. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and we cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth, but thank God, we behold the forests bending to the breeze. We may not know from what mysterious sources spring those dynamics which bend our hearts in contrition before thee. We only know that God is here because we feel God here.

SELF-DISCOVERY

"Like the tide of the crescent seabeach when the moon is new
and thin,
In all our hearts deep yearnings come swelling and surging in,
Come from that mystic ocean whose rim no foot hath trod,
Some of us call it Longing, and others call it God!"

Master, we thank thee that when we find thee we find ourselves. Some of us have never discovered ourselves because we have never discovered thee. And the more profound our discovery of thee the more complete our discovery of ourselves. Master, most of us are living only in the shallows of experience. The values that engross us are such miserable and unworthy values. When with God we launch out into the deeps of experience, when we really begin to live largely, then how mercilessly will we summon our past to the bar of our own illuminated better judgment! Oh, we thank thee for the Christ who came that we might have life and have it abundantly. Arouse us, blessed Jesus, from our lethargy! Let the lame walk, the blind see, the palsied gain new strength, and the dumb lips, —Lord, loosen them that they may articulate thy grace, so once more shall men marvel as of old: "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

AMEN.

XV.

A LIVELY HOPE

SCRIPTURE READING

I. Peter I: 1—5

HYMN

O FOR A CLOSER WALK WITH GOD

O FOR A CLOSER *walk with God,*
A calm and heavenly frame,
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb!

Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and his word?

What peaceful hours I then enjoyed!
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill.

Return, O Holy Dove, return,
Sweet messenger of rest;
I hate the sins that made thee mourn,
And drove thee from my breast.

A LIVELY HOPE

THE MESSAGE

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
—I. PETER I: 3.

“**A** GAIN” UNTO a lively hope—again! O this divine resurgence! Robed in her silver splendor the moon ascends her ebon throne of midnight. But her glory wanes, her splendor slowly dissipates until but a somber pall spreads on that throne. Then, lo, above the shroud a crescent crown appearing! Resurgam! The tide is at the flood. The full, deep waters claim the spreading shore. Then “that which came from out the boundless deep turns again home.” The wavelets move in massed recession until the beach is bare and white sands glint in sunlight. But, lo, the tides are turning. Thin lines of liquid streak the waiting sands, the tiny pools are filling; behind, the bigger billows heave. Again the full, deep waters claim the spreading shore. Resurgam! Summer—autumn—winter—spring. Resurgam!

“AGAIN”!—You see, the church also may have her periods of waning glory, her ebbsides of receding power, her unlovely periods of barren, wintry dormancy. Then, as was the story at the birth of Methodism, Resurgam! The crescent light, the turning tide,

the surge of spring, and a church of barren formalism breaks forth in pentecost.

But that word “lively” is speaking to us: “a lively hope”. The Revised Version says “a living hope”. I like the expression “lively”. I grant you we might not use it in just that connection today, but it seems exactly to meet the requirements, a lively hope not a quiescent one. How may I illustrate? Forgive a rather somber picture. Amid masses of flowers in that exquisitely appointed chapel on East Fourteenth Street, lay between the soft folds of the casket, the form of a beautiful girl of twenty-three. She had been a business girl and her companions of the office sat weeping silently as the organ sobbed its requiem. It hardly seemed like death but rather like a peaceful sleep amid flowers. Suppose in that awed moment gradually upon those cheeks the glow of warmth returned, the immobile bosom slowly rose and fell, the eyelids gently opened and the lips moved in articulate speech. Life! Life! Did you get the picture?—“A lively hope”.

That is what the apostle is saying. With the resurrection of Jesus Christ this hope of immortality has become a living thing. It had ceased to function vitally. It had become an intellectual speculation to be bandied among the pagan philosophers, or to be laid aside in the respectable crypt of theology, or to be blindly

though desperately clung to by the bereaved, or to be ignored by the multitude, or to be swept away by the Sadducees and their ilk. But now, resound, ye trumpets! Christ is risen! Christ is risen! "Hope springs eternal!" cries St. Peter—and the passage fairly sings: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

And, friends of the Fellowship of Prayer, by whatever method God appoints, I pray that you and I may get again in all its Pentecostal power, that lively hope. We have today a body of wondrous Christian teachings; but they do not function. They are formal, doctrinal, theological. Christ is encrusted in a creed. Oh for the Living Christ! The church is encrusted in an institution. Oh for a Living Church! Do you remember the early days of the Great War? Do you remember the whispered story of the Christ who moved on Flanders Fields? Do you remember how the soul of Christendom thrilled at the whisper? Was it not even rumored that a great Communion had appointed a commission to investigate the Vision? My friends, I dare affirm, had the Living Christ been authenticated, had the Man of wounded side and nail-prints lifted his outstretched hands above a warring

world, every sword would have been sheathed, every bayonet cast aside, the roar of cannon hushed in perfect peace, across the trenches men would have moved to clasp the hand of brother men, the curses of that fury would have been attuned to the sacredness of prayer, on Flanders Fields an altar would have risen, and there would have been dedicated to immortal God an age new-born.

And that thing happens in every Christian life in exact proportion as our hope becomes a living hope. God save us from apathy and formalism. God give us in our pulpits men of lively hope. Then something arresting begins to clarion in the sermon, something eternal begins to pulsate in the prayer, and scripture and hymn breathe messages divine. That sort of pulpit pulls at the hearts of men. God give us in our homes Christians of lively hope. Then the religion of home life would be potent, the family altar become a shrine, the converse of the home move upon loftier levels, the childhood of the home hear the blessed Master's "come to me", and old age be enhaloed with a sacred light. God give that living hope to Christians in the office, at the workbench, on the farm, on the campus. My friends, if in the soul of every Christian this day surged that lively hope, the cause of the kingdom of Christ would be invincible.

Does this seem to you like over-emphasis? Then I wish, friends of the broadcast world, you had been at our Tenth Avenue Prayer Meeting last night. Yes it was a good prayer meeting and largely attended. But as in so many services of the sort, there was the tendency toward the stereotype. "The same old story in the same old way." Just words—words—words. My own heart within me was crying out: "God let somebody say something that means something!" Then do you remember the attorney for whom we prayed at the Hour of Prayer one morning last year? [See *The Hour of Prayer*, Volume I, Page 215.] That splendid man arose and in the concise language of a man of his profession, revealed to that audience the travail of his soul and how at last he had come into an experience of Christ. In the midst of his testimony that strong man's voice faltered. Eyes grew wet with tears. There was a moment of sacred hush. Out of that hush arose a voice of quiet confidence: "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

From that point the prayer meeting became a living thing. Why? Because its formalism had been broken by the voice of one who had a living experience. God grant to every one of us the resurging consciousness

of the reality of his loving presence. Of these great aspirations let us speak with him:

Heavenly Father, somewhere have we missed thee? We thank thee that sometime we have known thee: that to a greater or smaller degree each child of thine has had an experience of God. But some have lost that experience. Theirs is today the lamp without the flame, the channel without the current, the harp without the melody. They have lost the joy of thy salvation. Without this we can do nothing. The strength of our life must ever be the urge that comes from conscious contact with God. Blessed Saviour, hear us as we call:

“Oh come to my heart, Lord Jesus,
There’s room in my heart for thee!”

Master, we believe this lively hope may be ours today. Mediocrity is not the program of Christ for his disciples. Thou hast not sent us to meet a blind world with blindness, an apathetic world with apathy, an uncertain world with uncertainty, a questioning world with questionings. Thou has given us an evangel affirmative, positive, dynamic. Thou hast given us a message, not a hypothesis. “Go ye and teach all nations,” thou hast said. Master, before we teach, may we learn. Before we go for thee, may we come to

A L I V E L Y H O P E

thee. Lord Jesus, we plead thy tenderness. Take us to thyself apart. Speak to each heart in language it can understand. Make our consciousness of thee a living experience, our testimony of thee a living testimony, our consecration to thee a living sacrifice, our hope in thee a living hope.

AMEN.

XVI.

PHANTOM ISLANDS

SCRIPTURE READING

Acts XX: 36 to XXI: 6

HYMN

MY GOD, MY FATHER, WHILE I STRAY

*MY GOD, AND Father, while I stray
Far from my home, on life's rough way,
O teach me from my heart to say,
"Thy will be done!"*

*Though dark my path and sad my lot,
Let me be still and murmur not,
Or breathe the prayer divinely taught,
"Thy will be done!"*

*What though in lonely grief I sigh
For friends beloved, no longer nigh,
Submissive still would I reply,
"Thy will be done!"*

*Though thou hast called me to resign
What most I prized, it ne'er was mine;
I have but yielded what was thine;
"Thy will be done!"*

*Renew my will from day to day;
Blend it with thine, and take away
All now that makes it hard to say,
"Thy will be done!"*

PHANTOM ISLANDS

THE MESSAGE

Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand.
—ACTS XXI: 3.

AND WHERE IS the life that has not had its isle of Cyprus; some sphere, observed, desired, but never entered? This scripture conjures up for me, the picture of torrid seas and shores of palm: The Windward Passage and the eastern coast of Cuba. That coast I have beheld seven times in the last twenty-seven years; yet never have I landed, and probably never shall I land. So near have I come to it I could almost hear the splashing of the big, blue waves as they broke upon the beach in showers of pearls, yet always “when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand”.

And such is life. How many different homes may have been ours. In my own life, not only where we live today, but there are other beauteous places that have charmed me. Friends in Ohio know how wistfully I have spoken of those highlands overlooking the sweep of the Little Miami. Those glorious elms and oaks along the wooded mountainsides, the charming landscape with its sinuous streams, the ever-varying picture of the changing seasons, the winter forests strung with frozen gems, the little farmhouses scattered down the valley, the fine curves of that great trans-

continental railroad, its serpentine trains skirting the bluffs along the river's course—and today the aeroplanes aloft—silver ships upon a sea of azure. God, what a world! And there we might have lived. "But when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand".

But why continue? You perhaps are thinking of the pines of Monterey which sing the anthems of the sea and of the ships that pass at twilight. You perhaps are thinking of orange groves and fragrances of snowy blossoms. You perhaps are thinking of our own great, verdant Valley, east and west of which rise the summits of dawn and of sunset. Sometimes again to me come the tantalizing whiff of logwood blossoms. But life moves on. Our ships must seek horizons. The islands of our dreams must pass; for "when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand".

And our friends—Oh, how we leave them too! Can I forget the recurring associations of twenty-five years when last I visited the cities of the East? Can I forget the lingering friendships of long ago? Can I forget that little group saying farewell at midnight in Central Station at Columbus, Ohio? Or that last trip to the West Indies—the few remaining faces of the years gone by, or the new faces which in my brief stay had framed themselves into the picture? And

you, my brothers—the other night did I not hear somebody singing on the radio about the “dear little oldfashioned town”? Did not that song awaken memories of footsteps which moved amid the “cobblestones” of the dear little oldfashioned town? Sometimes amid the sophistication of the city, how you have longed for the simple life, the faithful hearts in that dear little oldfashioned town! But no; the horizons call us. “When we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand”.

So with the tasks of life. I suppose Paul had many duties he longed to perform in Cyprus. And for us also rise these relinquished ranges of endeavor. I spent last Passion Week with the churches of Long Beach, California. The noonday meetings in the First Methodist Church of that city, were blessed of God, and before I left it was suggested that I go to a certain church there with my ministry. Again a call to Hillsboro, Ohio, another to Chicago. But here I am at the Hour of Prayer. Cyprus sunk behind the sundering sea.

It is enough. You will make applications from your own experiences. Your life also will have some “beautiful isle of somewhere” faded out yonder into the mists of the past. There are business men who had thought to be Christian ministers. There are

mothers who had thought to be foreign missionaries. There are stenographers who once had dreams of a musical career; captains of industry who would be statesmen; attorneys-at-law who have longed for the farm, and farmers perhaps who would live immortal on canvas. But no. Sail on! Sail on! Sail on! for "when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand".

Why so? As in Paul's case, two reasons I may mention:

First, time forbade. Real life is often suggested by those season tickets the transcontinental railroads issue in the summer months. You are allowed so long for your journey and while that period lasts, all sorts of stopover privileges are yours. The Eastern tourist plans for himself a schedule packed full. For a day or two he will stop at Chicago, visit the Art Museum, walk the Midway Plaisance. Again he will pause at Denver, view the ranges of the Rocky Mountains; again at Colorado Springs and while there ascend Pike's Peak. Certainly he will see the Royal Gorge, stop at Salt Lake City and hear the great organ in the Mormon Temple. Then perhaps he must see Mount Shasta, taste the effervescent waters that gurgle from its side. Oakland perhaps, the University of California and the Campanile, and the Greek Theatre. Then

the Golden Gate, Los Angeles, the Missions, San Diego. Then the Grand Canyon, the Petrified Forest, Yosemite, Yellowstone, the Canadian Rockies. . . . Too much! Too much! Unfinished! Unfinished! And that is life. They tell me the complete courses offered by a college would consume over one hundred years. We merely concentrate on our specific course. The rest we glimpse and pass. For "when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand".

I wonder if that Other Life will reopen these closed avenues. An interesting speculation. God knows.

Then secondly, there was in Paul's case, and often there is in ours, the challenge of a greater objective. God had planned Paul's life for him. Paul on that Damascus road had asked the question of the Master who arrested him: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Here in the presence of the vanishing isle of Cyprus was one of God's partial answers. Not the Isle of Cyprus lying bathed in silver seas of morning! No! Beyond lay Jerusalem, its howling mobs, its heroic episodes, its profound contacts. And beyond that waited Felix and the fair Drusilla. That Roman courtroom must thunder with proclamations of righteousness and temperance and judgment to come. Beyond that, Agrippa's court must grow scintillant

with the gospel's splendor. And beyond that, the tempest, shipwreck, the Appian Way, Rome, Nero, the dungeon from the iron gratings of which, like the white dove of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, his immortal epistles must flutter forth with messages of hope for centuries unborn, and beyond that the tremendous climax of his mighty martyrdom.

Perhaps on some soft Italian midnight when the revelries of Rome had ceased, an old prisoner, shackled and weary, beheld anew, visions of an island set so peacefully amid the sapphire sea; perhaps he murmured as his eyelids drooped in slumber: "And when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand".

My Father, is it not so? Have not many of us like Moses beheld some beauteous vision only to hear the verdict: "Thou mayest see it with thine eyes but thou shalt not cross over thither"? Have not our pilgrim souls longed to pitch their tents where flowed cool waters and where golden fruit hung pendant? Yet hast thou not called us back to the dusty highway?

Dear Lord, thou art a good God for thy highway leads at last to finer spheres and on the road ahead are tasks that wait—tasks the achieving of which adds sinew to our souls. God wills it, and God's way is best.

PHANTOM ISLANDS

But Master, we thank thee for our fleeting visions of Cyprus, for oh, how these visions come to temper life's hot realisms and how these horizons of memory, save us from lives that are cramped, narrow, provincial! We thank thee for our brothers who live in Cyprus. God bless them! God bless the men and women who are doing the things we have long wanted to do but cannot! God bless the men and women functioning in spheres our footsteps may not enter!

And, Father, wherever thy providence hath placed us, there let us feel the blessedness of thy holy Presence. It is enough.

AMEN.

XVII.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST AT ZENITH

SCRIPTURE READING

John XVII: 1—21

HYMN

LOVE DIVINE ALL LOVE EXCELLING

LOVE DIVINE, all love excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down!
Fix in us thy humble dwelling;
All thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe thy Holy Spirit
Into every troubled breast;
Let us all thy grace inherit;
Let us find thy promised rest;
Take away the love of sinning;
Take our load of guilt away;
End the work of thy beginning;
Bring us to eternal day.

Carry on thy new creation;
Pure and holy may we be;
Let us see our whole salvation
Perfectly secured by thee;
Change from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST AT ZENITH

THE MESSAGE

Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.—JOHN XIII: 1

THAT PASSAGE has always dripped sweet dewdrops of comfort for the soul of the sorrowing Christian. For does not one of life's most cruel disappointments come out of the consciousness of the impermanence of love? How are the harp-strings broken, and the loved melodies—how they wail away into silence! How burnt out like dead altar fires the passions once so sacred, and the gold how dimmed! Once in the house of a friend I took an urn off the mantelpiece, and opening it, a faint, reminiscent sort of fragrance greeted me. That urn held the withered petals of far-off years. Once those treasured roses were exultant with life. Now remained nothing but the faint and spectral fragrance. That is all that remains of many of life's most cherished loves,—faint fragrances lingering in memory's urn. Standing, a year and a half ago amid the smooth, round pebbles of a lonely shore, while the music of the waves brought back the old associations—standing there in that solitude how overwhelmingly came upon me the sense of the unreturning. The words of Tennyson came with new poignancy:

THE HOUR OF PRAYER—KTAB

“And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill:
But O for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.”

Yet through all these years—call it self-intoxication if you will: it is very real to me—through all these years, I say, the abiding, deepening consciousness of the love of Christ has been mine. Oh amid the flux of circumstance thank God for a changeless Christ! “Having loved his own which were in the world he loved them unto the end.”

That is one, and the more usual, aspect of the scripture.

But by changing the emphasis upon one word an entirely different aspect looms. As a variant rendering of the word “end” the Revised Version gives the word “uttermost.” The measure of that love of Christ then becomes not a question of *duration* but of *intensity*. “He loved them unto *the uttermost*.”

That is to say, Jesus always loved his disciples. He loved them when he called them to his side. He loved them when he shared with them the associations of Galilee. He loved them on the Mount of Beatitudes and on the Mount of Transfiguration. Always

and tenderly he loved them. But now the hour of parting drew near. The time of farewells was at hand. Then at that hour, love rose to heights. Love sought loftier levels. Listen again to the text: "When Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the uttermost." Why?

Perhaps, you say, it was because he was going to leave them. You may be right, my friend; for the tenderness of the human heart was Christ's. In him was a soul of lyric sensitiveness: a soul responsive to the sweetness of the lily and the pathos of the fallen sparrow. "Jesus wept." He knew the human pain of the hour of parting. And O my brother, has that experience ever been yours? What more sacred light do I perceive in personality when personality looms in the last hour! May I illustrate?

A lovely girl I knew. A few happy married years sped by, and then another face obtruded into the picture and spoiled the scene. Husband infatuated proved false. At last the home was broken. For him the wedding bells rang again; for her—loneliness. Years passed by. Business commanded this man thousands of miles across the sea. Certain affairs required his presence at the home of his former bride. The trans-

action completed, he took her hand: "Goodbye!" Was it the remembered clasp of a hand that once at the altar trembled in his own?—what was it? What was it? I cannot tell. But each for a moment saw life in its abysmal deeps. "Goodbye perhaps forever!" In a moment he was on his knees sobbing out his woe.

My friends, I heard the other day, sung by John McCormack as recorded on a Victor phonograph record, a song the words of which I can never forget because they brought back an undying picture from my own experience. That song: "The Last Hour"—

"Suppose, Beloved, that the gods should say,
You shall have just one hour of joy to spend
You two together; and then shall come the end.
What would we do with that last little hour?
I think our hearts would be so full of pain
We should not speak at all,
But you would take my hand close in your hand,
And you would look deep down in mine eyes,
Thus we should bless each other silently,
And go our way."

That for Jesus and his disciples was The Last Hour. And out of that last hour came the sacred Communion of the Lord's Supper. Wave upon wave rose the flood-tides of human feeling. "When Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the uttermost."

Or was it because of the added reason: He knew that at that moment they supremely needed his love? True, never in reality would he leave them. "I am with you always even to the end of the world", was the music of the last promise that fell upon them like a benediction. But until they also pierced the veil, his physical presence must be removed. The Presence that walked beside them, as the Presence that walks beside us, must be to the journey's end an invisible Presence. And God knows, the road that stretched before those men was strewn with tragedy. Upon yon hills cruel crosses rise. On to the inevitable they move at the urge of Destiny. And to that they move alone. What then? Out of this hour they shall rise to meet life's crises inspired by the love of Christ. Now must they perceive new visions of that love. Hitherto they had known that love only in partial expression. Today they sense its fulness. Having loved his own which were in the world, at this hour of finality he loved them to the uttermost.

My friends, tell me any more adequate preparation for life's crises than the benediction of love. Mother, that boy has gone out into the world today to acquit himself in the moral maelstrom. Why? He moves in the charmed atmosphere of the memory of a mother's love. Wife, husband today is going to meet his crisis

like a man. Why? He carries in his soul the tenderness of parting. O Love of Christ! With the encircling sense of that inspiration a man moves forth to do valiantly. "The love of Christ constraineth us."

And so the parting day was coming. Into the arena of a world implacably pagan that little group must plunge; to die and in their death to conquer. Master, at this moment what strength hast thou to offer thy chosen few? Love! Love at this moment rising to the climax of its expression. "When Jesus knew that the hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world he loved them to the uttermost."

And Blessed Master, centuries have gone but how we too need that love. Thou knowest that for us also life's crises present themselves. Souls there are today who know the anguish of slow martyrdom. For them let thy love be a light shining in the darkness. Others, Master, are filled with fear. Here is thy disciple, a lad, perhaps, who shrinks from a decided stand for Christ. He is afraid of ridicule. A young woman who is timid in her Christian avowals; another life, perhaps, afraid to face thy will. Lord, are we not told that

THE LOVE OF CHRIST AT ZENITH

perfect love casteth our fear? Oh inspire us with the love of Christ.

‘Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all!’

Lord Jesus, in lesser measure all of us, thy disciples, experience today thy love. Only how small is our grasp of it! The magnitude of that love as it stands epitomized in the Cross far transcends us. Lord, let us feel the throb of thy great heart! Lord, let us sense the tender sweetness of thy voice! Lord, to those who have special need of thee: the sick, the tempted, the sorrowing, the oppressed, reveal that love in some “uttermost” aspect. Thus, our slow hearts, enkindled by the flame of thine eternal passion, shall burst in holy flame “We love him because he first loved us.”

AMEN.

XVIII.

GOD KNOWS

SCRIPTURE READING
Psalm CXXXIX: 1—12

HYMN

IN HEAVENLY LOVE ABIDING

IN HEAVENLY LOVE *abiding,*
No change my heart shall fear;
And safe is such confiding,
For nothing changes here.
The storm may roar without me,
My heart may low be laid,
But God is round about me,
And can I be dismayed?
Wherever He may guide me,
No want shall turn me back;
My Shepherd is beside me,
And nothing can I lack.
His wisdom ever waketh,
His sight is never dim,
He knows the way He taketh,
And I will walk with Him.
Green pastures are before me,
Which yet I have not seen;
Bright skies will soon be o'er me,
Where darkest clouds have been.
My hope I cannot measure,
My path to life is free,
My Saviour has my treasure,
And He will walk with me.

GOD KNOWS

THE MESSAGE

O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.—PSALM CXXXIX: 1—2.

IN THAT CONSCIOUSNESS, dear friends let us find peace!

Is it the French who claim the saying: "To know all is to forgive all"? Possibly every life that shares this morning's prayer is saddened by the memory of some shattered friendship. And I am confident that in the vast majority of cases the sundering of souls was due to misunderstanding. Some time ago a friend of my childhood between whom and me estrangement had come, wrote in an effort to reestablish the old relationships. In answering him I said, "My friend, I believe all our difficulty could be expressed in two words: Misunderstanding and Misunderstood."

To know all is to forgive all. My brother business man, on this Fourth of July you are at home from work. Look back over the night to yesterday. Do you remember the man you "fired" yesterday? He was listless, incompetent, irritable—as an employe, impossible. But, my brother, had you known the sequences that led up to the day you might have pitied and not punished. Had you known the background of that man's home life—had you known the series of circumstances which sent him to business with his

life a jangling, shrieking discord—Had you known! Had you known! To know all is to forgive all. And God forgives, for God knows. “O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.”

For a wedding present my mother received a little watch on which she placed great value. It wasn't much as watches go today, but for that day it was deemed quite valuable. In course of time something happened. Perhaps it was a spring that went wrong, perhaps a chipped jewel. At any rate, she took it to the jeweler's and it came back worse. To another and another and another, but that watch never kept time again and at last stopped altogether. One day an expert came from across the seas, and to him the little mechanism was taken. He looked it over in a sort of tender fashion and then handed it back with the comment: “Well, they have done everything to it they shouldn't have done. And now it is ruined. Nothing can be done.”

Oh when I remember that little timepiece I think how it reflects the story of many a life. Everything done to it that shouldn't be done. Misunderstood, ill-treated, broken, brutalized; crying out in its very helplessness for understanding and sympathy. That spiritual craving the psalmist found fulfilled in God. “O

Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off."

You see, God knows a man's life at its antipodes. He knows its sunrise and sunset moments, its depths and its heights, its cataclysmic tendencies, and its supernal possibilities. "Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising".

Shall I suggest two rather distressing conditions? One is that a man should be under-evaluated; that the world should not recognize his moral, intellectual or social worth; that the pearl of his personality should be denied the setting it deserves. That is indeed distressing.

But even more distressing that a man should be over-evaluated; that a life should be exalted to a place it has not earned: that one should cry in vain to an applauding world: "Don't! I am not the person you take me to be!"

Just before coming to the prayer studio this morning I rang up the gentleman of whom I am about to speak and tried to get again clearly from him the circumstances that surround this incident. He had before told me the story. He had to take a trip to a Canadian city and on his train happened to be Conan Doyle. Somehow or other in the mind of his fellow

passengers he got linked with the English gentleman, and when he reached the platform at which the hotel equipage was awaiting Conan Doyle, he observed the conductor whispering a hasty word to the hotel representative who immediately approached my friend and with a profound bow, addressed him as "My Lord!" And then around the platform went the whisper: "An English lord travelling with Conan Doyle." Before he could protest he was on his way to the hotel where the clerk ushered him to a magnificent suite. Incidentally, another unhappy guest had been requested to vacate. Said my friend: "I am no English lord. I am an American here on business!" "All right my lord, we understand." On the side to an attendant: "His Lordship is travelling incognito." My friend said he saw his only hope was to let the thing go through until he could slip away, but said he, "I certainly felt like a thief and every sort of a criminal."

Are there lives that seem to masquerade like that? —Don't tell me how good I am. God sees my heart of sin! Don't tell me how strong I am. God knows my weakness. Don't tell me how grand a success I am. God knows the haunting failures that torment me. "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou

knowest my downsitteing and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off."

But thank God, he sees the summits also. In the best of us he sees the sombre aspects of the soul, and in the worst of us he sees some aspect of sublimity. Not only my downsitteing: he knows also mine uprising. He knows the periods when the soul spreads its pinions. He knows the periods of aspiration, the moment of moral daring, the moment when that divine self, reflect of his own great Life, mounts to transfigured expression. Not my downsitteing only, Master, thou knowest also mine uprising.

Am I right in saying those two words are inseparable? Am I correct in saying that the measure of a man's downsitteing is often the equation of his uprising that life's pendulum-swing is the same in each direction? The soul that scales supernal heights is the soul that shudders over abysmal depths. The soul that rises to the moment of ecstasy is the soul that betimes may sink beneath the overwhelming avalanche of depression! Sunshine and shadow—God knows these paradoxes of life. "Thou knowest my downsitteing and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off."

Nor must we miss those closing words, although they should engage our thought an entire morning.

"Thou understandeth my thought afar off." That is to say, God knows the sequences of conduct. That is to say, God knows not only what I am, but why I am what I am. God knows not only what I think, but why I think what I think. God knows not only what I pray, but why I pray what I pray. Thou seest the meanderings of the subterranean stream before it surges to the surface. Thou seest the torrents that slash the mountains—thou seest while yet the clouds that create the torrents are forming. Before he turns his footsteps homeward, thou seest the prodigal's bitter struggle—aye, thou seest the thought which finds articulation in the cry: "I will arise and go!" "Thou understandest my thought afar off."

Friend, is it helpful to remember that God knows why you are what you are? Perhaps, my brother, you are a failure. The world knows you as such. But there are some things about you the world doesn't know. The world doesn't know the sorrow that smothered your spirit. The world does not know the disappointment that took the sinew out of your life. The world does not know the misfortune that broke you! God knows!

Travelling the other day I came upon a bridge above whose abutment a large sign appeared: "This bridge will not bear a load over eight tons." Not long

after another bridge; a smaller bridge: "This bridge unsafe for over four tons." And I thought every life has its breaking point. And only GOD KNOWS —GOD KNOWS!

"O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off."

Master, do we understand ourselves? We use the body thou hast given us, but how little do we know of the marvel of its mechanism! We use the mind thou hast endowed, but how little do we understand its mysterious workings! We experience the spiritual impulses that swell within us but what do we know of the eternal deeps from which these impulses arise? We recognize sometimes the opportunities which life presents, but do we understand the councils of God which directed these opportunities to our threshold? We enter the day which thou hast opened before us, but are we conscious of the significance of this day in the wondrous scheme of thine eternity? Sorrow and joy are ours daily; sunshine and shadow checker our pathway; cradles come and caskets; temptations and aspirations, but are we conscious that with these mingling threads which thou hast placed in our hands we ourselves are weaving the fabric and the pattern of

our own destiny? O thou Infinite Intelligence, we thank thee that thou art also Infinite Tenderness. "Thou knowest our frame, thou rememberest that we are dust."—Verily! But we thank thee thou knowest also that that dust is but the habitat of clay in which is imprisoned an immortal spirit. We are of thee, Almighty God. From thee we came, to thee we come! O Everlasting Tenderness! "Like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." We rest in thee.

AMEN.

XIX.

FOLLOWING THE FOOTSTEPS OF GOD

SCRIPTURE READING

Job XXIII

HYMN

LEAD KINDLY LIGHT

L EAD, KINDLY LIGHT, *amid the encircling
gloom,*

Lead thou me on;

The night is dark, and I am far from home;

Lead thou me on;

Keep thou my feet: I do not ask to see

The distant scene; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou

Shouldst lead me on;

I loved to choose and see my path; but now

Lead thou me on:

I loved the garish day, and spite of fears,

Pride ruled my will. Remember not past years.

So long thy power has blessed me, sure it still

Will lead me on

O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till

The night is gone;

And with the morn those angel faces smile

Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile!

FOLLOWING THE FOOTSTEPS OF GOD

THE MESSAGE

My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined.
—JOB XXIII: 11.

ONE OF THE most pathetic outcries of the book of Job expressed the patriarch's yearning for the consciousness of God. Classic has become his exclamation: "Oh that I knew where I might find him!" Above the tangled labyrinth of Job's life rose the startled query: "Why? Why? Why?"—"Why does God permit these tragedies to overwhelm my soul? Indeed, where is God?" Friends of the Fellowship of Prayer, last year, you remember, we contemplated the four aspects of Job's quest as described in verses eight and nine. [See *The Hour of Prayer*, Volume I, page 36.] "I go forward but he is not there, and backward but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand where he doth work but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand that I cannot see him." Then comes the remarkable scripture of the morning. Permit me to paraphrase the passage: "Although nowhere can I discern the presence of my God, his *footprints*, at least I can see. These footprints reveal to me God's way. I follow on. 'My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept and not declined.'"

Many are the directions from which we may get

this passage in perspective, and each one reveals it in some new and beautiful aspect.

First, we may regard it as a source of comfort. "My foot hath held his steps". Life's pathway has led me into terrible situations. I have been bruised by the rocks and torn by the thorns; I have fainted on the mountains and fallen in the fens; I have been smitten by the noonday sun and shrouded by the midnight fogs. Here I stand bruised, bleeding, bewildered. The past has been terrible; the future is portentous. But my suffering is in no wise the result of my sin. He knoweth the way that I take, and he knoweth that that way has not been of my own choosing. Not for a moment have I left the narrow way. I have not strayed. Behold the footprints of God! Always and unswervingly "my feet have held his steps, his way have I kept and not declined."

That I say, is a source of mighty comfort. Not *what* I suffer, but *why* I suffer—this is the cardinal thing. There is a suffering that is a very hell on earth; and there is a suffering in the very fiery vortex of which appears "the form of one like unto the Son of God." For example: Here is a young man of education and of Christian home life, who against every dictum of conscience and of reason cuts loose, launches amid the whirlpools and rocks of sin, and at

last is thrown upon the spuming shore amid the derelicts of earth; not only morally, but financially, socially and physically a wreck. Suffering? Yes: and that suffering is a sort of hell. But here is another young man doomed to life-long suffering.—And hear me dear friends, the great ones of the earth may have been criminal in the war just passed. Selfishness, greed, hate and national fanaticism may have intoxicated the leaders of mankind. Even today the average man is confused in the presence of that horrible dilemma. All this may be true, but again hear me: that detracts not a whit from the exalted motives which sent the youth of the world with singing into that holocaust to sacrifice their fine, young lives at the altar of human liberty. Listen to Allen Seegar's dying ecstasy:

"The soldier rests. Now round him undismayed
The cannon thunders, and at night he lies
At peace beneath the eternal fusillade. . . .

That other generations might possess—
From shame and menace free in years to come—
A richer heritage of happiness,
He marched to that heroic martyrdom.

Esteeming less the forfeit that he paid,
Than undishonored that his flag should float
Over the towers of liberty, he made
His breast the bulwark, and his blood the moat."

Something of the sacredness of Calvary in that! Transfigured suffering! A pain that reflects the glory of high heaven! Not what we suffer, but why we

suffer. This morning listening in at some hospital are two men: both very sick men; but one is reaping the harvest of his early sowing. The other is a fireman who at the call of duty plunged into the blazing apartment house and rescued a mother and her little child. One is suffering because he left the way of God: the other is suffering because he held heroically to the way of God. This it seems to me was one great comfort of Job. "My cross is not a self-made cross. The road to my Calvary I take because God wills it. 'My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined.'"

Another aspect of the passage reveals a soul of high courage. There are times when God's footsteps mark the pathway to very pleasant places. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, he leadeth me beside the still waters." So many of us have found it. My sister, yours today is a home of happiness. Many comforts surround you. Husband is faithful, steady, successful. He is a Christian man. Other wives you have known whose experiences make you shudder. Husband has never pressed upon your brow the crown of thorns. Children—not one has caused anxiety or shame. Yours is a happy Christian home. For this you owe everything to God. God's footsteps have marked out the way to pleasant pastures green.

So with Job. For him God's footprints marked the slopes of dawn. Marble palaces had swung open to him. Domestic felicity environed him. Stalwart sons and daughters directed his enterprises and children of the third generation climbed his knee. A place of commanding social prominence was Job's. A prince he was. Retainers and servants waited to obey. His world was full of the bleating of his sheep and the lowing of his oxen. Dromedaries roamed the horizoned hills. And perfect health was his: nights of slumber and days surging with vitality. These things had come as a result of right living. God's footsteps had marked the slopes of dawn. Job found, as many another man has found that the ways of righteousness are not without recompenses. Well aimed, therefore, was the sarcasm of the Adversary: "Doth Job serve God for naught?"

Aye, into these pleasant places we are willing to follow God's footsteps. But sometimes they lead beyond the slopes of dawn over to where the shadows fall. God's footsteps were leading Job toward Gethsemane. Gone were the sunbeams; come were the shadows. Wealth—gone! Social standing—gone! Children—gone! Vitality—gone! A poor, diseased and broken man crushed down amid the ashes of his own fireplace is listening to the taunt hurled at him

by the wife of his bosom: "Renounce God and die!" What is Job's answer? "Shall we receive good at the hand of God and shall we not receive evil?" Over the sunny ranges have I followed the footprints of God. Into shadows of sunset, into the darkness of night I hold to the way he has marked. "My foot has held his steps, his way have I kept and not declined."

Friend, had you held to the footsteps of God your life today might have been a story of exploits. You found those footprints leading into loneliness and night. Ringing down the crags you heard the challenge of some great "Excelsior!" You were afraid. You turned back. Today how you wish you had had courage to follow! How many a minister could tell the regrets men of middle life had whispered to him. And you, my sister: perhaps you also did sometime see those footprints marking some heroic pathway for your life. You chose the easier road. It was a mistake. You are sorry today. But other courageous lives listening to this Hour of Prayer, can affirm with humble confidence: "My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined."

A third aspect of the passage reveals the integrity of faith. Job seems to say, "I can't see God. I can't discern his presence, but at least I can do right. Spiritually, I am in a maze. In vain I call for God! The

echoes of my unanswered prayers come back to torment. I am a bewildered man. One thing only is as clear as the sun that shines at noon: right is right. Now and forever I shall hold to the footsteps of God!"

Give us this sort of a purpose, O great Father!

"I do not ask my path to understand,
My way to see,
Better in darkness just to grasp thy hand,
And follow thee!"

Teach us dear Master, though for the moment God's road seems very hard, yet in the end, God's way is always best. Hast thou not said, "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life"?—That leadeth *unto life*! Master, when our footsteps falter on the way reveal to us *the life*—the life to which thy footsteps lead. Fix our thought upon the ultimate goal and not upon the ways of attainment. Only the goal is fixed, our Father. The ways we leave behind. Pleasant or perilous, sunny or storm-swept, we cast them behind us as we move toward horizons. Only, where are they leading us?—only this matters. Help us to choose the narrow way that leadeth unto light rather than the broad way that leadeth unto darkness. Teach us that God's footsteps mark the way to Glory. Help us to hold fast to thy steps.

AMEN.

XX.

THE DIVINE DISCONTENT

SCRIPTURE READING

Phillippians III: 7—14

HYMN

O THAT I KNEW THE SECRET PLACE

O THAT I KNEW *the secret place*
Where I might find my God!
I'd spread my wants before his face,
And pour my woes abroad.

I'd tell him how my sins arise;
What sorrows I sustain;
How grace decays, and comfort dies,
And leaves my heart in pain.

He knows what arguments I'd take
To wrestle with my God;
I'd plead for his own mercy's sake,
And for my Saviour's blood.

Arise, my soul, from deep distress,
And banish every fear;
He calls thee to his throne of grace,
To spread thy sorrows there.

THE DIVINE DISCONTENT

THE MESSAGE

I press on.—PHILIPPIANS: III: 12

PERHAPS I SHOULD apologize for being here this morning. This is really the first day of my summer vacation and I said "Goodbye" to church and air audiences last night. I couldn't, however, quite reconcile myself to leaving without this little parting word with you, dear Friends of the Fellowship of Prayer.

You see, before circumstances decided my sphere of labor with the Baptist Communion, I was a Wesleyan Methodist and no spiritual exercise in that church was to me much more helpful than the testimony meetings including the weekly "class meetings." What an opening of the heart! What letting out of spiritual emotions! What a letting in of light!

This morning we are going to have an experience meeting—all of us; only I am going to do the "experiencing" for everybody. For I believe if there is anything to which we can bear universal testimony, that one thing is the inner urge of discontent.

Was it not our own great Edison who recently told us he never in all his life met one perfectly satisfied and happy man? Where then is the man who is satisfied with his accomplishments? Yesterday throughout the United States, thousands and thousands of

sermons were preached. Show me today the minister who is perfectly content with the work he did. If such a man there be I am sorry for him. Between the vision of the ideal and the concrete actuality what a gulf! When dreams come true how they shrink! When flowers are plucked how they shrivel!

She is now beyond the reach of life's little heart-aches, but I recall this of her: During her early married life before a modicum of the world's wealth was achieved by her husband, she always treasured a dream of the sort of home she would like to build. At last the day arrived. Her husband made possible the house of her dreams. To all intents she was her own architect and all employed in the construction merely executed her will. The house was not half built before she decided to change; and again, and yet again she changed. At last the structure was completed. I can see it now standing there against the background of the hills. Looking upon it that poor woman burst into tears and exclaimed in bitter disappointment: "O that it might burn to the ground and that I might have a chance to build again!"

Extreme? Certainly. And yet to a greater or smaller degree does not that experience belong to all of us? Did not Raphael turn from his Sistine Madonna with "a clouded brow and disappointed heart"?

Do not the words of that great man, William James, rise out of abysses deeper than his grave?—

“Failure, then, failure! so the world stamps us at every turn. We strew it with our blunders . . . our lost opportunities, with all our memorials of our inadequacy to our vocation. And with what a damning emphasis does it then blot us out! . . .”

Is this merely a fine rhetorical period? Not at all. It is the heart-cry of a human soul, and in your heart, in my heart this morning it awakens strange accordant echoes!

For not only are we dissatisfied with what we do, we are even more dissatisfied with what we are. I was reading the other day the autobiography of Benjamin Franklin. After he had recounted in a rather abbreviated way, a shady episode in his life he characterized it: “erratum number one.” Later on he introduced us to “erratum number two.” Later again: “erratum number three.” I wonder how many errata are marked in our life stories? Sometimes the present does not reveal them. The future will. I am reminded of a volume presented to me. On the fly leaf in front was pasted a strip of paper printed in red. That strip of paper directed you to errata scattered through the volume. Why did the author not discover the errors before the volume was bound? Why so often do we

not until the "finis" is near at hand? Old gentleman, perhaps only now you are discerning the sad errata of a misspent youth. Sister of maturer years, only now you are discerning the better pathways your life might have chosen. Oh how few of us are ultimately willing to stand before God on the basis of our merit. How many prefer to lean upon the Everlasting Refuge!

"Divine Absolver, grant my soul may wear,
The lowliest garb of penitence and prayer;
That in my Father's house my glorious dress
May be the garment of Thy righteousness."

What then?

May I mention two or three sources of comfort?

First, I find comfort to remember that God knows. God knows not only the thing I do, but he knows the thing I want to do. He sees not only the imperfect execution of my hand: he sees also the radiant vision of my heart. And he knows that heart's suffering because of the lapse between vision and accomplishment. God knows not only the man I am, but he knows the man I want to be. And he knows my penitence because of the terrible lapse between ideal and reality.

Friends, were I at this moment to present my biggest oblation to my God, that oblation would be not anything I have done, nor yet would it be anything that I am. Rather I should present to God my WILL. "Lord, here is thy servant's will. Take it. It

is thine!" And I believe such offering is precious to the heart of God.

Second, I find comfort to remember that tomorrow brings another chance. Watching the contractor who renovated this church, seeing the perfection with which his plans worked out, I said to him one day: "Mr. Marshall, you are a wonderful man; you seem never to make mistakes." He answered: "Mr. Phillips, the big man is not the fellow who never makes mistakes, but the man who will deal with them honestly and honestly correct them."

"And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter . . . And Peter went outside and wept bitterly." Yet out of the ruins of that ugly yesterday, rose the radiant Preacher of the Pentecost! So on the stepping-stones of our dead selves may we arise to higher things.

Third, I find comfort to remember that if our will is right with God then are we in God's way and though God's way be a long, long way, it is leading us to some beautiful finality.

This morning as I drove to the Hour of Prayer I saw by the wayside a field of ripening corn and I asked myself: "How many thousands of years did the Master labor to produce an ear of corn?" Away to the east rose the sear hills soft with dawn and I asked myself: "How many thousands of years did the

Master labor to paint yon hills upon the canvas of the sky?" From this, my mind turned back to the heavens of last night. You recall how clear the evening was. Reaching my home in the country an hour before midnight, I could not help gazing upward at the procession of the heavenly hosts as it moved majestically toward the portals of the west; and again I asked myself: "How many thousands of years labored my God to add one little star to the unnumbered hosts of heaven?" Then anew came to my soul the message of Saint John: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God . . . Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come! We bless thy name that while man looketh upon the outward appearance, God looketh upon the heart. We thank thee that our real selves are ever in the focus of thy sight. Some there be who shrink and shudder at this. They would fly from the white light of thine omniscience. They call upon the engulfing caverns of the deep and the descending avalanches of the mountains to hide them from the face of God and

from the Lamb. But, Master, there are others of us who call upon the deep to recede and lay bare our sins before thee, who call to the obscuring rocks and debris of time which smother the past, to remove, that our sinful selves may come into the light of thy countenance. In that light the soul finds penitence, healing, resurrection. Blessed God! There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared.

Not what we are but what we will to be! Not what we do but what we will to do—such, O great God, do thou accept of us! Our hope, our comfort evermore shall be: God knows!—God knows!

“Therefore we come, thy gentle call obeying,
And lay our sins and sorrows at thy feet;
On everlasting strength our weakness staying
Clothed in thy robe of righteousness complete;
Then rising and refreshed we leave thy throne,
And follow on to know as we are known.”

AMEN.

XXI.

ACROSS THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS

SCRIPTURE READING

Acts XVI: 22—40

HYMN

WHERE THE MOURNER WEEPING

*WHERE THE mourner weeping
Sheds the secret tear,
God his watch is keeping
Though none else be near.*

*Jesus ne'er will leave thee,
All thy wants he knows,
Feels the pains that grieve thee,
Sees thy hidden woes.*

*When in grief we languish,
He will dry the tear,
Who his children's anguish
Soothes with succor near.*

*All our woe and sadness
In this world below,
Balance not the gladness
We in heaven shall know.*

ACROSS THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS

THE MESSAGE

Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee.—PSALM LXXIX:
11.

ONCE LET THE tool of your incisive thought pierce beneath the surface of this passage and you are amazed at the uncovered strata of unsuspected wealth.

The plight of the ancient prisoner was something foreign to the experience of modern America. Think not of the comparative comforts of our incarcerated. They were in contrast veriest luxury. Read again *The Prisoner of Chillon*. Hear in the Book of Job the tortured prisoner's cry for death. A few weeks ago workmen excavating on the Boulevard St. Michel, Paris, broke into the long-lost torture chambers of the Petit Chatelet. In they went but out they fled, sick with horror. Says *TIME*: "Skeletons sat upright against the dungeon wall. Some lay with heavy wooden collars about their necks, some were chained to blocks of stone. . . . A Sorbonne professor inspected a cadaver whose clutching fingers showed the agony of death. . . . The finest collection of instruments of torture in Europe."

"Hell" seems the only adequate word—just Hell. And out of that environment arises to the throne of God the prayer of the passage: "Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee!"

How then may we briefly characterize the prisoner's sigh? First, may we not call it, The Sigh of Sincerity? The poor man's tortured soul is in that sigh. No mere recital that, no formula, no ritual, no rote. A sigh that concentrates life. "Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee!"

Do you know, my friends, there are prayers, and *prayers*, and *PRAYERS*? There are prayers in common type, and prayers in italics and prayers in capitals, and prayers in headline type, and prayers that shriek in crimson characters. Aye, there are spoken prayers, and whispered prayers, and prayers wept out with tears, and prayers which go writhing in agony. They tell me that from mediaeval dungeons stray shrieks would sometimes escape into the outer world that made the blood of the passer-by run cold and stopped him in his tracks. Perhaps only one word: "Help!" But in that single word, my God, how much!

Prayers there be which reach the very heart of God like that. I have stood in my pulpit on Sunday mornings and watched the faces of those hundreds singing such words as:

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling."

and I have seen reflected attitudes of soul. There

were those to whom the song meant merely words—a picturesque expression of pious sentences; those who evidently gave not much thought even to words. The tune was theirs; others sang not at all; stared vacantly into space. But there was a soul: I knew its story. And in the face of the singer glowed the light of a tragic intensity:

“Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling.”

“Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee”!

Sincerity, I say. Downright earnestness. Is anything more needed in the Christian world today? Why not more conversions? Why not more overwhelming baptisms of power? Why not more penitential outcries? Why not more—shall I say—“miraculous” answers to prayer? Lack of that sincerity which grips the whole man at the very roots of personality. Souls in the pain of spiritual travail know that attitude, and God knows it. “Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee”!

Last Sunday evening a week ago do you remember I told you of the mayor of a certain southern city who was overcome by a great temptation? I told you then how that much gold which was not his was appropriated by him, and how soon after K'TAB came on the

air he wrote telling me his troubles and saying how through certain messages I had given and he had heard over KTAB, he had resolved to make a clean breast of it all and take the consequences. I told you how he had gone to prison, how I had never since heard from him. I was speaking of the glory of a gospel which could come to a broken man like that, blot out his imperfect past like a thick cloud which melts in morning sunlight, and open before him a new and radiant day. That happened two weeks ago. Last Sunday evening a middle-aged, refined gentleman took me by the hand. "Mr. Phillips, I am the man of whom you spoke. I thank you for your word." The average man I suppose retained no memory of my sermon. This man did. To him it was the Word of Life. His heart was crying for God. "Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee"!

The prisoner's sigh is also the Sigh of Helplessness. He has crossed the Bridge of Sighs. Freedom of action belongs to yesterday. On yon rocky ledge stands San Quentin, its battlemented walls paced by sentinels and washed by waves of the sea. Some day I shall go to San Quentin. When I get ready I shall leave San Quentin. Those incarcerated men will not leave when I leave. They are prisoners. I am a free man. Some

years ago I was invited to preach to the prisoners at the State Penitentiary, Columbus, Ohio. As I remember, some fifteen hundred men were massed in that auditorium. On that bright summer Sunday morning they sang, they smiled, they wept, or stoically sat and stared. Adamant sentinelled walls and gates of steel encircled us. The hour drew to its close. "Goodbye!" Sad eyes followed me. I moved toward the outer world. The great walls melted before me like the mists of morning. The gates were as powerless as shadows. I was free! But for those prisoners, walls and gates were granite and steel.

Fifteen hundred powerless souls. What held them there? Aye, the invisible hand of the Law was upon them. "The Tombs"—what holds them there? Devil's Island—what holds them there? The Law, invisible and irresistible—the Law! Some day the law will be expiated, and for them also the walls will be but barriers of cloud. The bars become but shadows. . . .

Friends did you ever sing and in your deep soul know the meaning of the song:

"Free from the law oh happy condition,
Jesus hath died and there is remission"?

Helpless souls—of these I speak. Aye, there be those in the dungeons of Sin; and those in the

dungeons of Remorse; and those in the dungeons of Doubt; and those in the dungeons of Sorrow; and those in the dungeons of Despair. Dear God in Heaven, they are so helpless! Have pity! "Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee"!

And, strangely, here is a prayer that is merely a "sigh": Sometimes our most potent prayers are inarticulate prayers.

"Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of the eye
When none but God is near."

Did you ever remain on your knees for an hour and say nothing? Did I say, "Say Nothing?" Forgive that! Mute eloquence! A sigh, my friend, may fill infinity.

O thou who hearest the unspoken, let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee! Our lesser thoughts are very noisy. Our greatest thoughts are quiet. Our lesser emotions reveal themselves. Our deepest emotions are mute. It is the surf that shouts. The unmeasured deeps are still. Father, the utterances we are permitted to express—these belong to men, because expression is necessary that they may understand. But the great things we find it impossible to express

—those belong to God, for with God words are quite unnecessary. The language of our lips belongs to our fellows, but the language of our heart belongs to our God. And thou knowest how often even behind the language by means of which we strive to reveal ourselves to our brothers—thou knowest how often behind this language, is a magnitude which eludes all utterance. As our real self must remain invisible, so must our real thought remain inarticulate. O thou who seest that invisible self, O thou who fathomest the unspoken impulse—"O thou that hearest prayer, unto *thee* shall all flesh come!"

Imprisoned by our doubts, imprisoned by our fears, imprisoned by our sinful habits, imprisoned by our sorrows, imprisoned by our prejudices, imprisoned by our human limitations—imprisoned—imprisoned! O thou who hearest the unspoken, let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee. In the name of Christ,

AMEN.

XXII.

TRUTH IN THE INWARD PARTS

SCRIPTURE READING
Psalm LI.

HYMN

COME TO OUR POOR NATURE'S NIGHT

*COME TO our poor nature's night
With thy blessed inward light,
Holy Ghost the infinite,
Comforter divine.*

*We are sinful, cleanse us, Lord;
Sick and faint, Thy strength afford;
Lost, until by Thee restored,
Comforter divine.*

*With us, for us, intercede,
And with voiceless groanings plead
Our unutterable need,
Comforter divine.*

*In us, "Abba, Father," cry;
Earnest of the bliss on high,
Seal of immortality,
Comforter divine.*

*Search for us the depths of God;
Upwards, by the starry road,
Bear us to Thy high abode,
Comforter divine.*

TRUTH IN THE INWARD PARTS

THE MESSAGE

Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts.—PSALM LI: 6.

HERE IS A MAN guilty of a series of most aggravating sins. The story of David's illicit relations with the wife of Uriah is quite familiar. In this David had sinned as father, as citizen, as sovereign. He was guilty of unfaithfulness, subterfuge, adultery, and of the most cold-blooded and calculating murder. Yet when the prophet Nathan brought him face to face with the enormity of the tragedy the lesser aspects of his sins were lost in the presence of that which was supreme. The lesser bars of justice waiting to convict him were for the moment forgotten as he faced the Great White Throne. To the august Judge of Souls his penitence arose: " 'Against thee—thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight!' This sinful inner self is known to God alone. Men saw the river after it had reached the open world. It is God who saw the fountains forming in the deep caverns of thought. O God, my great sin is not so much that I have *done* wrong as that I have *been* wrong. Before I acted the murderer I was a murderer within; before I gave way to lust I was impure within; before I wrought a lie I was a lie. This thing is not the sin of my body but the sin of my soul. I pray not that thou should'st cleanse my sin but that thou should'st cleanse

me. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. It is not so much a course of action meticulously and mechanically correct which thou, O God desirest. 'Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts' "!

David was essentially right. Friends of the Fellowship of Prayer, may I remind you that "the inward parts"—or the inner life as we usually say—holds the very texture and fiber of personality itself? When I read this passage I think of veneer and varnish and enamel. Current life seems to be a thing of crass objectivity. The outside seems these days to be the important thing. Not only do we resort to subterfuge, but the world knows that we resort to subterfuge, and we know that the world knows. The drug store supplies the glow of ruddy youth to our cheeks—men's now as well as women's, I understand. Perhaps the paint advertisers have established the principle: "Save the surface and you save all." At any rate, we live on the outside, and hear me, my brothers, before we discover God we must rediscover in ourselves the inner world of real values. "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts"! Realities eternal—those count. The other day I paraded the ten-cent stores and beheld their brazen gewgaws.—I like to parade the ten-cent stores. I like to see all the things, to mingle with the crowds who buy.

Downtown if you miss me at the cafeteria at noon, try the ten-cent stores.—I was saying, in this array of “less expensive” merchandise I beheld knives and forks of bright silver listed at the store’s scheduled prices. Leaving the crowded house I called at the jeweler’s where my watch was being cleaned. Upon a velvet background I observed a set of silverware. “How much for your ten-cent knives and forks, Mr. Jeweler?” He smiled. “Two hundred and fifty dollars, Doctor. Those are solid.”

That counts with God—“truth in the inward parts”. My friends, I have in my home this day an old mahogany bed. It is, I suppose, over a hundred years old. You may cut any part of it and you will find it mahogany clear through. It is mahogany today; it was mahogany a hundred years ago; it will be mahogany a hundred years to come. It is mahogany in California, it was mahogany in Ohio, and in the West Indies. As a sapling and as a seed it was mahogany. As dust at last it will be mahogany dust. Laugh at my bed because it is native-made and rough-hewn? Perhaps so: but it has truth in the inward parts. And I have seen men like that. Poor men, uneducated men, uncouth men, perhaps, rough-hewn men; but real men through and through. Theirs was truth in the inward

parts. Each man presents two aspects: the outer and the inner. One aspect the world sees, the other the world never sees. Here is the outer man: He is poor, shabbily dressed, part bald, has a wart on his nose, possesses a peculiar mannerism, and what not. That is the objective man. But besides, there is the subjective man, and he is as invisible as God. Some day, my brother, I shall see God face to face; and some day I shall see you face to face—subjective you, for that is the eternal you. That is the self that prays, that contacts with the eternities. That is the self which must stand before the Great White Throne. And that is the man God is supremely interested in. "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts".

Again: I recall to you that this inner self is the potent source of the outer life. Out of that fountain-head spring all the streams of conduct. How essential then that we have truth in the inward parts!

Some time this week our sexton came to me: "Dr. Phillips, please don't drink that water in the drinking fountain. It isn't fit to drink. I am afraid the sewer is backing up into the fountain. I have just called up the Water District office and they will have a man right over." The man arrived. What was his report? Nothing wrong with the sewer. The trouble said he,

is farther away than that. It is at the reservoir. They are right now working on the water in the reservoir, due to the shift from the local water company to the municipal project. When the water in the reservoir becomes pure the water in the faucet will become pure.

Need I apply? God is not nearly so interested in the faucet of action as in the fountain of being. Young man, watch your thoughts! Young woman, set a guard over the unseen impulses of your soul! Behind the mechanical movement stands the man. I believe God is more satisfied with the good man who does a bad act than with the bad man who does a good act. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts. A hurried call came to me one Sunday afternoon to visit the home of an official of my church. I found him in bed drunk. That man was not a drunkard. He was a child of God. Circumstances conspired to strike him in a moment when he was off his guard. He fell, but he fell with his face toward the goal. Fifteen years have passed. He is today a stalwart Christian. I knew of a missionary in foreign climes—lonely, sick, homesick, dejected—below par physically, mentally, spiritually—who made one false step, and fell—dear God, such a fall! The rest of his life was one long penance for the error of a moment. He buried himself in the Dark

Continent. He bore a cross that would have crushed a lesser man, until he was translated to glory, a saint of God. I tell you, if the heart is right, the whole man will come right. Not at the periphery of conduct—no; it is at that inner center and core of being God strives to make contact with the life of man. "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts".

And may I venture the assertion as I close: That the unseen man is the eternal man. What we do we leave behind us, for good or ill to carry on century after century: "Seeds of the harvest and what we have done." I should do wrong to minimize the influence of conduct. What we do will create repercussions throughout the ages. But more eternal than the thing we do is the thing we are. As a child I did many things which today amount to little. Their influence has shaded off. God grant that even the wrongs of later years will be counteracted by the good of some noble life. Indeed, may not the sinner, like Paul, himself start counter-tendencies which will go far to neutralize the evil of his past. But the thing we are, my brothers—that thing remains, it grows, it evolves. Reverently I speak when I say it is everlasting as God is everlasting. It is this life within that God is striving to save. Let me reiterate again and again: In the

divine evaluation, vastly more important than the thing we do is the thing we are. God desires not moral automata, doing right by rote. The grain and fiber of an eternal selfhood—this with God is supreme. "Behold thou desirest truth in the inward parts".

"Search me O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting." Father, it is not the wicked way I walk but the "wicked way in me": it is not the wicked way of my steps but the wicked way of my heart—this with thee is the supreme evil! Great God, change our conduct by changing ourselves. Is not this the story of thy salvation through Christ? Lord Jesus, did'st thou not tell us that "from within, out of the heart of man proceedeth. . . ." Did'st thou not warn us about being whited sepulchres? Master, cleanse us from within. Create in us clean hearts. Thou canst do it. For this thou did'st suffer and die, that in thy suffering and death new life might come to birth in us. Lord, help us to be buried with thee in the mighty baptism of thy mediatorial death that as thou did'st rise from the dead so we also may rise unto newness of life. Save us, O Saviour of mankind! Help us not only to do

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right but to be right. Give us the new heart, the clean heart, then shall thy beatitude be ours: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

AMEN.

XXIII.

FOLLOWERS OF THE LAMB

SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah LIII

HYMN

I WORSHIP THEE, SWEET WILL OF GOD

I WORSHIP THEE, *sweet will of God,*
And all thy ways adore;
And every day I live, I long
To love thee more and more.

*I love to kiss each print where thou
Hast set thine unseen feet;
I can not fear thee, blessed will,
Thine empire is so sweet.*

*He always wins who sides with God,
To him no chance is lost;
God's will is sweetest to him when
It triumphs at his cost.*

*When obstacles and trials seem
Like prison walls to be,
I do the little I can do,
And leave the rest to thee.*

FOLLOWERS OF THE LAMB

THE MESSAGE

These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.
—REVELATION XIV: 4.

LAST NIGHT as in the quiet of my own home I read this passage, it brought to me a wealth of new suggestion. A few of the thoughts which came to me may be helpful at the Hour of Prayer.

At the very start two words became foci of interest:

First, the "Lamb". Lovely pictures of our California hillsides arose before me. It was not long since I had travelled an unfrequented road which meandered through the hills and had come upon a great flock of sheep moving down the slopes to a shaded stream which threaded a quiet little valley. What an aspect of Jesus: the Lamb—the Lamb of God. A strange, new leadership for mankind, is it not? Men have through all the ages followed the lion, and followed the wolf, and followed the taloned and screaming eagle, and stealthy ones have followed the fox, and some with subtle, sinuous passion have even followed the serpent. But "these are they which follow the Lamb"

The second focus of interest was the word "follow". What is this? We live in an age of self-will. We live in an age that boasts its intense individualism (An

empty boast, I am afraid!) We proclaim our freedom from tradition. We relinquish proved traditions for passing fads. We project our own life programs, our philosophies, our moral codes—so-called. But here are submissive spirits ready to proclaim as did Cardinal Newman:

“I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou
Should'st lead me on;
I loved to choose and see my path; but now
Lead thou me on:
I loved the garish day, and spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will. Remember not past years.”

It were as though we beheld a devoted group: Here is the young man with all the strength of his youth upon him; here is the young woman with all the buoyancy of maidenhood; here is the man of letters with all the refinement of scholarship; here is the scientist with his mighty cosmic grasp; here is the capitalist who sways the course of international industry; here is the man of political prominence whose thought is potent in the shaping of a nation's destiny; here is the woman who functions largely in the social sphere. Who are these? Loyal souls every one of them. In a world of social and moral rebellion these have bowed their own wills in sweet subjection to a Will their hearts accept. “These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.”

Now let us observe certain aspects of this follow-

ing of the Lamb. In the first place, it implies purity. This is the Lamb of God "without spot or blemish", and to follow him is to move in paths of purity. With shame I confess the moral reek of our age. The stain splashes on the "silver screen", it blots itself upon the headlines of our newspapers, it spreads over every page of our realistic fiction, it splatters itself about the marble halls of our iconoclastic institutions of learning. . . . In an age of moral iconoclasm—these are they who follow the Lamb! . . . Visions clear as the morning sunlight, souls unsullied as the virgin snows, spirits as sweet as evening zephyrs touched with wild roses—these are they who follow the Lamb! My friends, reveal to an age that gives beautiful names to its own sad sin, to an age that enthrones its own tragedy,—reveal, I say, the followers of the Lamb. Trumpet above the wild voices of our moral rebellion: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God!"

This following of the Lamb implies also submission. With Jesus was not the will of God supreme? "God Wills It"—was not this the keynote of his life? And is not this also the keynote of Christian maturity? A gentleman came to see me yesterday. "Pastor, in your sermon Sunday morning you said something I shall never forget." "What was it, my brother?"

"You said that when first you accepted Christ you were afraid to know the will of God, and now you are afraid not to know the will of God. Pastor, I thank you for that thought." And when he had thus spoken I noticed that my brother walked toward this Prayer Room and closed the door behind him.

"These are they which follow the Lamb"!

Submission! God's program needs submissive souls. Can any great enterprise be successfully projected without leadership? And of what use leadership if there be none to follow? Survey the Panama Canal: Behold its mighty locks, its lake upon yon tableland to which the great ships are lifted from watery platform to watery platform; its severed mountain through which the tides of ocean flow; its vast system of subterranean machinery. Behold that gigantic enterprise! What does it reflect? Submission. Obedience to a will. Myriads of men each severally outworking the consummation of one man's thought. A greater enterprise challenges the ages. "Thy Kingdom Come!" How may this be consummated? "Thy will be done as in heaven so on earth." What were the words used of our Master? "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God!"

My brothers, do we dare to follow the Lamb

FOLLOWERS OF THE LAMB

whithersoever he goeth? Are we wavering in the presence of some mandate of God? Oh let us submit! Let us submit!

“My God, my Father, while I stray
Far from my home on life's rough way,
Oh teach me from my heart to say
Thy will be done.

Renew my will from day to day,
Blend it with thine, and take away
All that now makes it hard to say,
Thy will be done.”

Thus may we also be numbered with those who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.

But the noblest aspect of this following of the Lamb is sacrifice. “He is led as a lamb to the slaughter.” “Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!” As the Passion Week draws near, the Cross is emerging into focus. Each life approaches sometime its own Passion Week; upon each man's horizon a cross sometime appears. O comrade, hast thou had strength to meet that cross? Art thou indeed numbered among those who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth?

In a suburb of Cincinnati stood a little shop where an old man of foreign extraction wrought single-handed at his lonely tasks. In our own city, Oakland, I saw a shop like his the other day. Above the door

a sign was painted: "We Fix Everything." So did this little shop. There seemed, however, to be one exception, for when I arrived with a broken typewriter, the old man looked it over and gravely shook his head. He had the reputation of being a recluse with a dash of the cynic in him, and for months I had been trying to get beneath the hard exterior and discover the real man. On this day of the typewriter incident the human approach seemed to be opening up, and at last his reserve entirely laid aside, we sat talking there like brothers. With trembling voice he told me of the great wrong which had broken him socially and economically and cast him aside to the hermit sphere of his little shop. He told me how political intriguers envying a federal position he held, had accused him of disloyalty, how he had been denied the hearing he deserved, and merely supplanted without commotion. Dumbly he had moved out into oblivion. And then as he spoke a fire seemed to flame upon his ashen cheeks, a light seemed to leap into his listless eyes: "Patriotism, sir? Let me show you my patriotism!" Tremblingly his shrivelled fingers clutched at the bosom of his shirt. He wrenched it aside. His breast stood bare. Almost above his heart an angry, knotted scar where a bullet had ripped its

way. "There, sir, is written the story of my patriotism!" His trembling finger touched the wound, and as I looked there came anew the meaning of the divine stigmata. The words of Paul seemed written on that old man's breast: "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the dying of the Lord Jesus!"

Such thoughts were mine last evening as I read again the passage: "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth."

O Lamb of God! How many alien voices are calling us from thee!—The voice of ambition, the voice of greed, the subtle whispering voices of passion, the siren voices of forbidden pleasures, the murmuring voices of doubt, the haunting voices of fear. O Jesus, all of these voices thou hast heard for thou wast the Son of Man. Did not the whole discordant medley meet thee at the hour of thy Great Temptation? Did they not mingle with the night winds of Gethsemane? Did they not hiss thee at the Cross? Yet over the discordant din ever did'st thou discern a higher mandate, and ever did'st thou follow the still, small voice of God. Art thou not calling to us, "Follow me"? Oh may we also turn from this Babel! Oh, in an age that

rejects our Lord, in an age that turns hither and yon at the alluring of each new voice, may it be said of us: "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth"! Have we strayed? Reclaim us. Are we in doubt? Illumine us. Are we stumbling? Uphold us. Are we uncertain? Assure us. So shall we follow the Lamb, and follow to the journey's end.

AMEN.

XXIV.

ONLY ONCE YOU PASS THIS WAY

SCRIPTURE READING

Ecclesiastes XI

HYMN

ONE SWEETLY SOLEMN THOUGHT

ONE SWEETLY solemn thought
Comes to me o'er and o'er;
I'm nearer home today
Than e'er I've been before.

Nearer my Father's house,
Where many mansions be;
Nearer the great white throne,
Nearer the jasper sea.

For even now my feet
May stand upon its brink;
I may be nearer home,
Nearer than now I think.

REFRAIN

I'm nearer my home, nearer my home,
Nearer my home today;
Yes, nearer my home in heaven today,
Than ever I've been before.

TO THE READER: I am sure a word of explanation will make the meditation to follow a little more interesting. This book comprises only a fraction of the Hour of Prayer Meditations during 1929. The question as to which of the little talks should be incorporated and which laid aside was not an easy one, and I hit upon the expedient of letting the public decide. Those for which the greatest number of requests were made are included herein. The others I put away with something of regret, as they will probably never again find vocal or printed utterance. Each new morning must bring its own new thought.

Now, can you visualize this picture?—Far beyond the seas a little cottage nestling near a torrid hill over which the waterfall splashes its perpetual spray. The night jasmine fanned by the soft land breezes sends its delightful perfume through the open windows into the parlor where the family group is gathered for the evening's converse. Father, Mother and seven children are grouped under the central lamp which hangs down from the rafters. Many of those seats are now forever vacant, but the old home still stands—deserted. At any rate, can you get the picture?—The soft light of the old lamp falling on the home circle and Mother reading to the children. What is

she reading tonight? One of the "Pansy" stories from a religious magazine. "Pansy" is indeed a member of that humble household: a name each child has learned to love.

This year I received a letter written by a trembling hand. It began, "My dear Pastor", and moved on to tell how much The Hour of Prayer on the radio meant to her. Because at ninety she could only occasionally attend the place of worship, the daily Hour of Prayer and the Sabbath Services broadcast from our church were to her as light at eventide. She had read the first volume of the Hour of Prayer. She was happy a second volume was to be published and requested that in it be included the address given on February fifth of this year. She was afraid I might not know the writer, but she has been known under the nom de plume of "Pansy". Few things have touched my heart more profoundly than that letter. God bless Pansy! And let me say as I dedicate to her this little meditation: that as the wondrous sunsets of our Golden Gate leave lingering lanes of lovely light upon the evening sky, so when the sun of her own sweet life has set, earth's horizons still shall hold lingering radiances of her pure and gentle spirit.

ONLY ONCE YOU PASS THIS WAY

THE MESSAGE

Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.—DEUTERONOMY XVII: 16.

ONCE—Such is life's story!

As little children, we gathered ferns along the foothills; but our dewy armfuls spread out at last found no two fronds the same. Also at the Christmas time we gathered Capanile blossoms, but for no single snow-white bell was ever observed a duplicate. Also we gathered from green stems crimson coffee berries, but neither in detail of color nor of form could there be found identical two among ten thousand. Also we have strung together shells gathered from the wave-washed shores; but each shell seemed to remain eternally a unique creation. And to this I have come: Fifty times over have I passed the annual cycle: Oh the days—the days—the days! How their multitudes march by! Yet in all my life of half a century I cannot find one day which has ever duplicated itself. Each day a unique creation which at sunset passes. In fact, if we employ the figure of our text, our own experiences validate its substance: "Only once you pass this way."

These words, as you recall, were spoken to the Israelites during their wilderness pilgrimage, and we may find it helpful to note how they fitted the case. The experiences of these tribes marked a distinct

phase in their national development, and a phase which ever afterward provided the background of their history. What a changing series of experiences!—the Red Sea, the Marah, the pillar of cloud, the pillar of fire, the manna, the fiery serpents, the water from the smitten rock, the war with Amalek, won while Aaron and Hur held up the weary hands of Moses, the golden calf, Mount Sinai and the decalog, and at last divided Jordan. These episodes are destined never to be repeated. It is like saying to America: "Plymouth Rock, and Valley Forge, and San Juan Hill come not again. 'Only once you pass this way.'"

Oh the changing panorama of existence! Say to infancy and childhood: "Only once you pass this way." Say to youth and maidenhood: "Only once you pass this way." Say to her whose heart is fluttering at the opening strains of the wedding march: "Only once you pass this way." Say to the man of forty who stands at manhood's zenith: "Only once you pass this way." Say to him who relinquishes the cares of business for the quiet of approaching twilight: "Only once you pass this way." Say to yon aged couple walking hand in hand toward the valley of the shadow: "Only once you pass this way." I wonder, dear friends, whether the scenes in your life have been

as distinctly marked as my own. Sometimes I can hardly realize I am the same man, or whether I am living in the same world. My early life, vivid though it remains, appears at times a sort of impossible unreality. The whole picture is changed—has been changed a dozen times. And with the closing of each epoch the verdict has been spoken: "Only once you pass this way."

And the wilderness presented also its own unreturning opportunities. There the great beginnings of their national institutions were being outwrought. There in a special sense God was revealing himself. Some day Sinai would cease to blaze, some day the manna would cease to fall; some day Moses, the greatest of men, would cease to speak; some day these cardinal opportunities for faith, for patience, for submission, for heroism, for integrity would be gone. Seize the day! Rise to the hour! Achieve! Do it now! "Only once you pass this way"!

A young woman in one of my Eastern charges used to give quite unusual testimonies at the midweek meeting. When she arose to speak you never knew what to expect. One night the topic was "Opportunity", and she said something like this: "I met a man today. As he came toward me I noticed what wonder-

ful hair he had. His locks were long and heavy and black as night. He passed me. I thought of his hair and looked again. But the back of his head was as bald as a baby's head. I ran after him to ask his name, and he said, 'My name is Opportunity. Nobody recognizes me until I have passed. Trying to grasp me from behind they have left me bald.' " Of course this is an old figure, but does it not apply to the majority of us? If the language of your hearts could reach this studio this morning as my voice is reaching you, what stories of regret I should hear. Something you missed somewhere. Some word unspoken, some kindness neglected, some service unrendered. Perhaps, Father, it is that boy of yours. You are thinking what a different young man he might be today if long ago you had done your duty by God and him. If only you had him again a little lad upon your knee! But no: "Only once you pass this way."

Whenever I read that strange story of Philip and the Ethiopian I recall a similar mandate of the Spirit in my own soul. It was nearly thirty years ago, and soon after my conversion; I was standing alone in the church-yard on the hill. What took me there that morning I do not recall, but a sort of "mood" was upon me. On the country road which wound directly

in front of the little church a young man on horse-back was passing. The moment I saw him I experienced a distinct command of the Spirit: "Go speak to that young man." Instantly my defenses were up. "I don't know him." "What can I say to him?" "He will think me a religious fanatic." Oh every kind of excuse presented itself! But again the Voice which commanded Philip spoke in its own language: "Run join thyself to his chariot." I did not. The young man rode out of my landscape. The next week I heard something about that man which made me solemn. The very night before the morning in question he had been drawn by curiosity to a Methodist revival meeting, and there had made a stand for Christ. His entire background had up to that time been one of pronounced ungodliness. This morning was his first morning in the new life. His soul was probably at that very moment when God spoke to me, crying for help. Being a young man like himself a word from me at that particular moment might have been decisive in his life. That young man I have never seen from that day to this. True, other opportunities for service have come, but that one never returned. "Only once you pass this way."

To the Israelites these words must also have carried

great comfort. Egypt's bondage is a thing of the past. Gone the Pyramids! Gone the task masters! Gone the endless tale of bricks! Gone the slaughter of your children! Gone the hordes that with set lances and scythed chariots swept down upon you by the Red Sea. Yonder is Canaan! "From Egypt's bondage come!" "Ye shall henceforth return no more that way."

Thank God, no sorrow, no temptation, no difficulty is for his children eternal. Thank God for the sorrows we shake off by the way! Thank God for the storms which go rumbling beyond yesterday's horizons! Thank God for the temptations, which striking hard, fall at your feet like arrows spent and blunted. I don't know what I should do if I were compelled to endure perpetually the temptations of my first year as a Christian. All of Pharaoh's hosts swept down upon me at the Red Sea. They wanted to re-enslave my soul. But God opened the sea and made a path for me. I fled through. What became of my pursuers I cannot tell. But God must have somehow wiped them out for I found my way to safety, and in that decisive temptation the issue as to whether or not I was to go back to Egypt or face the road to Canaan, was settled once for all. At that Red Sea of mine the

die was cast. After that, the Marahs lay ahead, and the thirst, and the human frailties on the heavenly pilgrimage, yet there a merciful God pronounced the fiat: "The world shall no more claim thee as its own. 'Thou shalt henceforth return no more that way.' "

Father, help us in the presence of this new day thou hast sent us, to remind ourselves: "Only once you pass this way." This is God's day, and God's will this day awaits us. Impress upon us that thou hast a will for this day. Either thy will is to find expression through us or we are to prove recreant. Give us to feel the solemnity of making history. Every act of us, every word, every thought passes this day into the everlasting record. The world is going to be a better place, or worse, to the extent of our lives today. Lord, help us to make this one of life's great days!

Yesterday is past, and for that we thank thee. For some the crisis of a great sorrow was passed yesterday; for some temptation made its supreme charge—and failed; for some the billows of the storm broke highest yesterday. Still the seas are snarling, but never shall the tempest strike so hard again. And yesterday some were scaling upward over cutting crags. Below

them the abysses yawned. This morning God has led them o'er the hillcrest to his plains of peace. With joy let us take thy message to our souls, "Ye shall henceforth return no more that way." The name of God be praised!

And Father, we thank thee, that though the experiences of the past may go, the memory of the past remains. We thank thee that even after the harp-strings are broken the song recurs; even after faces pass from the picture their image remains in the heart; even after some momentary vision of God is a closed incident, we return to erect an altar to the memory of it. Father, hast thou not bidden us: "Remember all the way the Lord thy God hath led thee"? Verily, dear God, how could some of us ever forget? From Nile to Nebo; from childhood to senility; from cross to crown we move. For the tomorrows we thank thee, but for the yesterdays also God be thanked! The past at least is certain. That is secure. Some of that past provides our wealth of satisfaction. Some of it is sad, and much is imperfect. May our failures teach us. Not entirely lost the ugly yesterdays if they help us to make the tomorrows more beautiful.

And Lord, may all the ways lead us at last to thee.

AMEN.

XXV.

BY THE WAY

SCRIPTURE READING
Luke XXIV: 13—32

HYMN
GOD OF THE WORLD

GOD OF *THE* world! thy glories shine,
Through earth and heaven with rays divine;
Thy smile gives beauty to the flower,
Thine anger to the tempest power.

God of our lives! the throbbing heart
Doth at thy beck its action start;
Throbs on, obedient to thy will,
Or ceases at thy fatal chill.

God of eternal life! thy love
Doth every stain of sin remove;
The cross, the cross,—its hallowed light
Shall drive from earth her cheerless night.

God of all goodness! to the skies
Our hearts in grateful anthems rise;
And to thy service shall be given
The rest of life, the whole of heaven.

BY THE WAY

THE MESSAGE

Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?—LUKE XXIV: 32.

THERE are some places where the presence of Christ is profoundly apprehended. A group of members from Tenth Avenue Church are now on a trip around the world. In a little while they will be standing beneath the olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane. It seems to me if they make pilgrimage to that place at evening they will carry away with them a sense of that distant drama which will remain a life-long impression. Standing by a little battered country church around which the orange blossoms made sweet the morning air, my own thought recalled the day of my conversion. Across the years a song came singing:

"At the cross, at the cross, where I first saw the light . . ."

At that moment of memory Christ was not far away. At noon the other day in San Francisco I dropped into a Catholic shrine. Men and women were kneeling about in prayer. I also knelt. In that environment it was not difficult to realize the Blessed Presence. Our own beloved Doctor Wolfkin once gave a series of addresses to the students of Denison University. Before the series closed the college was swept by a revival. Almost every member of the football team

accepted Christ. Hymns were sung in the fraternity houses. Group prayer meetings were held at the various clubs. That year Jesus Christ walked the campus of Denison University.

I repeat, there are some places where the presence of Christ is profoundly apprehended. Your own life recalls special situations parallel perhaps to those I have mentioned. For such we give God thanks. But, my friends, sometimes my deepest gratitude to God is for the Christ By The Way. Not so much for the Christ of special manifestations but for him who moment by moment moves with us along the humdrum routine of life's daily round, sustaining, illumining, inspiring. O men of Emmaus how often, we, your comrade disciples, have echoed your exclamation: "Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way?"

Let us then think about a few of the characteristics of this "way" of our Emmaus friends. First, dare we venture to call it a weary way? Sixty furlongs we are told was the measure of that road. Not very far I grant for pedestrians of that day when walking was the rule. But journeys are not to be measured only in lineal measurements. How far was the journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus? The length of that journey

was inversely the equation of the buoyancy of the souls of those disciples. When the heart is light no journeys are long. When the heart is leaden all journeys are long. Between our home and that of a relative was a stretch of nearly six miles. That journey was frequently made in my boyhood; and I remember starting one evening in an unhappy frame. I was tired before I started. I thought I would count my steps for half a mile and then see how many steps must be taken before the journey ended. That performance merely made the journey endless. But one evening as I started out I happened upon a chum who lived half a mile beyond that distant home. We immediately plunged into matters of mutual boyish interest. From that point the journey lost all length, and when we said goodbye at my gate I actually regretted I was at my journey's end. Oh how different life becomes when we walk with Jesus by the way! How the miles slipped for those travellers to Emmaus! After Jesus came the weariness went. Buoyancy found their footsteps. "Did not our heart burn within us. . . ."

Again, was not theirs a sorrowing way? On Golgotha a cross had arisen and on that cross their hopes had been crucified. The Christ had vanished, and with his going hope had gone. Said they: "We

trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel."

On my little ranch I am fortunate to have a hill. I love hills. Many of my finest hours are spent on my hilltop. Glorious are the sunsets I have watched from that summit. The other evening again I witnessed a sunset, and I noticed this: that when the sun went down in the west, the darkness came up in the east. When the Light of the World goes out from our souls darkness reigns! When Christ arises with healing in his wings darkness flees. When for those disciples the life of Christ went out, hope went out, joy went out, faith went out, the zest of life went out. The pinions of their souls enchained, they walked with leaden steps. But now all unconsciously, a new dawn is overspreading them. Christ is on the road today. The heart has found again its song and found it "by the way". Not in some distant shrine, not in some apocalyptic vision. He came upon life's pathway trodden by the sons of pain. "Did not our heart burn within us, while he spake to us by the way?"

Oh thank God for the Christ by the way. For how we need him there! By the way the thorns enmesh us; by the way the thunderbolts smite us; by the way temptations allure us; by the way little grievances annoy us; by the way the world entices us, and by the

way we so often forget God. O Master, we shall need thee in heaven. Heaven without thee would not be heaven.

"Just to be there and to look on his face
Will through the ages be glory for me."

O Master, we shall need thee at the hour of death. Without thy hand in ours how can we take the leap into the dark? Then we shall need thee. But, Master, most of all we need thee by the way. For by the way the issues of life and death are for us determined.

And may I call this a twilight way? When these two disciples reached the journey's end they breathed a vesper prayer: "Abide with us for it is toward evening and the day is far spent."

How can I refrain from telling you the story? Yesterday coming down to the groundfloor of my church I saw standing at the foot of the stairs a man I had for long months missed from my congregation. He is a good Christian man with a strong evangelistic trend. There he stood bronzed and smiling waiting for me. "Where have you been, brother?" "Way East, pastor. And I walked back." "Walked back?" "Yes, sir. Perhaps I should say I sang my way across the continent." Then he told me how he decided to walk nearly three thousand miles, preaching Jesus as he went. He told me how into some of the lonely

places he brought his ministry of song—how in fact his heart went singing all the way. What had happened? He had walked with Jesus from the land of sunrise to the land of sunset. Do you wonder he stood smiling? “Did not our hearts burn within us, while he spake to us by the way?”

Listen friends: There are some wonderful things which marked for these Emmaus disciples the journey’s twilight end:

At the journey’s end they knew more about the program of Jesus.

At the journey’s end they knew more about the meaning of the cross of Jesus.

At the journey’s end they knew more about God’s purpose as that purpose was revealed in Jesus. “He opened to us the scriptures”. They grasped a new significance.

At the journey’s end they had caught the spirit of the Master.

At the journey’s end he who was at first a stranger, and then a chance acquaintance had become a friend. “Abide with us for it is toward evening. . . .”

And my comrade hearts, when for us the journey ends in twilight may we also have learned life’s lessons by the way. May we come to the close like men who

have been illumined with visions.

Master, for some of us it is a sorrowing way. The thorns spread thick around us. We limp along. For some it is a tedious way. So endless the road, so uneventful. For some it is a lonely way. The comradeships that marked the beginning of the journey have all been lost. We walk alone today. For some it is a desert way. Yesterday we moved amid the verdant Edens. Those scenes belong to yesterday. Now misfortune has come. No flowers remain today; no singing streams: only the bald desert and the stinging sands. For some of us it is a darkened way. The lights of love have failed us.

"All the tender ties that bind us,
While the days are going by,
One by one we leave behind us,
While the days are going by."

O Comrade Christ, come thou and join us on our way. Hold thou the long road with us to the journey's end. Then shall we shout it to the winds, trumpet it to the crags of the mountains, hurl it defiant to the powers of darkness: "All's well! All's well, for Christ is here!"

"I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness:
Where is death's sting Where, grave thy victory?
I triumph still if thou abide with me."

AMEN.

XXVI.
UNAFRAID

SCRIPTURE READING
I John IV: 4—21

HYMN

MORE LOVE TO THEE, O CHRIST

*MORE LOVE TO thee, O Christ,
More love to thee!
Hear thou the prayer I make,
On bended knee;
This is my earnest plea,
More love, O Christ, to thee,
More love to thee!*

*Once earthly joy I craved.
Sought peace and rest;
Now thee alone I seek,
Give what is best:
This all my prayer shall be,
More love, O Christ, to thee,
More love to thee.*

*Then shall my latest breath
Whisper thy praise;
This be the parting cry
My heart shall raise,
This still its prayer shall be,
More love, O Christ, to thee,
More love to thee!*

UNAFRAID

THE MESSAGE

Perfect love casteth out fear.—I JOHN IV: 18.

IS JOHN EMPLOYING the axiom of physics, that two things cannot occupy the same space at the same time? Here is a submarine: when its air chambers are filled with water, naturally, the atmosphere is driven out, and the submarine sinks. When under pressure air is pumped in, the water is driven out and the submarine rises. Let me not press the analogy too far; only some such picture is suggested by the passage, "Perfect love casteth out fear".

In two aspects let me present this saying of Saint John:

First, I think we may regard the passage as portraying a new attitude of the human heart toward God—an attitude in which love replaces fear. In the Christian scheme there is no place for harrowing fear. Let me hasten to say, however, that this elimination of fear presupposes an adjustment of our lives into harmony with God's will. Otherwise fearlessness becomes merely foolhardiness. When we function in harmony with the will of God then may we eliminate fear; but the moment we go contrary to that will then wisdom demands pause for serious apprehension. Verily, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Yonder in the high atmosphere an aeroplane

wings its way. Let that aeroplane function in harmony with the law of gravitation, and however dizzy the height, fear may be forgotten. Let that aeroplane defy the law of gravitation and a pitiable piece of tangled wreckage lies somewhere. Human souls have perished like that, are perishing like that all around us today. Again let me emphasize: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." In my Bible I find a contradiction which I shall present some morning at the Hour of Prayer. Opening that Bible I find on one page these words: "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice". Across the page I read these words: "The Lord reigneth, let the people tremble". Contradictory? Not at all. Your attitude, my friends, decides which passage is applicable to you. It is like saying: "The fire burneth let the earth rejoice." The loss of fire to the earth would be a cardinal tragedy. The fire burneth let the earth rejoice. Factories move, ships cleave the waves, warmth drives out the winter's chill. . . . But also, "The fire burneth, let the people tremble." Behold our beautiful Berkeley ablaze! Behold the wooded mountains burning like torches!

Too long have I dwelt upon this thought. I have done so, however, because of a popular and foolhardy fallacy which this message of mine must not enhance.

First get right with God, and then fear may be driven from your soul. Love is enthroned. Love dominates. And "perfect love casteth out fear".

What an emancipation! Take that greatest of scriptures: "God is love." Could we believe that with all our heart we should become emancipated souls. Look at the universe in which we live. Everywhere we are awed. All around us are Titan forces so vast that we stand in the presence of them abjectly helpless. A mere contact with some floating cosmic fragment and our boasted civilization—where would it be? Tornado, earthquake, volcano, glacial drifts—all sorts of cosmic cogs which wait to grind out the life of us. And the fear is not for physical life. Our bodies are merely garments soon to be outworn. Our fear concerns the ultimate character of things. "Of things" did I say? Of *God*! With what are we dealing—blind Force or Fatherhood? Omnipotence confronts us certainly. But the vital question is: Does that Omnipotence inspire hope or dread? Is it an Omnipotence that destroys—that tramples our finest values in the dust, that crushes the soul of us out of existence, or is it an Omnipotence that saves? Is God to be the object of mortal terror or is God to be the supreme object of human devotion? John replies: "'God is love'! Behold that

love of God revealed in Christ! Don't be terrified because of God. He is your Father! Love him with all your heart, and fear will vanish. 'Fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. Perfect love casteth out fear' ”.

How beautiful that changed attitude of the soul toward God! Two contrasting pictures let me bring. First, the old schoolhouse of my childhood. Incidentally, do we happen to have among those listening in some man who as a boy attended school in England? My brother, did you ever get a taste of the master's cane? If you did, though you may be an old man now, you have not yet forgotten. “The flavor lasts!” But I am speaking of that old schoolhouse. There was the master's desk, and hanging on the wall beside it that instrument of torture. Four hundred students assembled in that single central room, and at times four hundred pairs of eyes focused upon it. Did the master make a suspicious move, those eyes followed him to note in what direction he moved. Afraid? Verily! Spontaneous self-expression in that school? Not much of it. Whatever came out of us was scourged out of us, and I know men past middle life today who continue most heartily to hate the very name of that head master.

Another picture: Did you ever see one of the little

red brick schoolhouses in Ohio? There it stands in its framework of great trees—oaks and elms and walnuts, with here and there a hard maple splashed with autumn. In front is a picket fence painted white, and near the footpath an old well with its dripping bucket. How many an American who has gained national prominence brings back with tender recollections just such a picture of the little red schoolhouse! But the picture is not yet complete. There beneath the trees stands “teacher”—some fair young college girl perhaps—and clinging around her the little boys and girls from the scattered farms. How often have I witnessed such a scene!—the smiling girl, with many a little one holding up its offering of flowers! And, looking on, the contrast of that other schoolhouse came upon me. In that picture stands portrayed my message of the morning: “Perfect love casteth out fear”.

Second, we may regard the passage as portraying the changed character of a life’s function when love becomes its motive power. Here again “perfect love casteth out fear”.

A woven nest where tiny fledglings await the coming of the little mother. She is such a mite of a thing. Easily you could crush her between your thumb and forefinger. And she is so timorous, such an incarna-

tion of fear. A snapped twig, a suspicious movement, and though you may be many yards away, she darts like a streak and is gone. But today pull down that nest of fledglings, and the dart turns in the other direction. Fear is gone. That bird hurls at you her tiny life. What has wrought the miracle? It is love! "Perfect love casteth out fear".

Do you recall the classic story of Hanna Lammond, the Scottish peasant woman? Making hay in the field her infant cradled yonder. A rush of pinions, the startled cry: "The eagle!—the eagle hath ta'en away Hanna Lammond's bairn!" Far up the splintered crags to the aerie floated that human fragment. Hardy sailors who at mastheads had met the tossing storms, looked up and grew dizzy. Suddenly, before a hand can be lifted in restraint, she is gone! She is on the cliffs—can you see her? Hanging on like a cloud inch by inch she rises. Men and women fall to their knees. Can you see her? She is there! Fierce pinions circle around her with wild cries. "My bairn! My bairn!" The sobbing shelter of a mother's breast. And now downward with the burden. . . . Friends, shall I give you the story in a sentence? Listen: "Perfect love casteth out fear".

Or shall I tell you in a sentence the secret of the

martyrs' fortitude? How could flesh and blood thus endure? "Perfect love casteth out fear". Or shall I tell you the story of the Cross? "Perfect love casteth out fear". And must not each of us discover for himself this blessed secret? Are you afraid, my sister? Are you afraid to take the name of Jesus with you into the world of your social contacts? Or you, young man, are you afraid of your Master's call to heroic service? Or you so recently embracing the better life—are you afraid to stand before the world irrevocably for Christ? Or you who face some special cross—are you afraid? Then open your heart to the abundant inflow of the love of Christ and as darkness moves out when light moves in, so fear shall fly at the ingress of the love divine, for "perfect love casteth out fear".

"More love to thee, O Christ; more love to thee." Thou knowest how many of our lives are motivated merely by a sense of loyalty to a rather hazy conception of a Christ once revealed. Thou dost seem sometimes so far away. Thou dost seem to move amid scenes so foreign to the lives of modern men. Lord, illuminate our visions that we may see thee, a present Saviour in a present world. In flame our loyalty with the sacred fire of thy love! Show us that for our

crown of life thou did'st wear the crown of thorn!
Show us that for our weight of glory thou did'st
endure the weight of tragedy! Show us that for our
home eternal thou did'st become the homeless Christ!
The Son of Man had not where to lay his head. O
thou by whose stripes we are healed, give us such
glimpses of thy love, which passeth knowledge, that
of us also it might be said: "We love him because he
first loved us."

Thus shall we enter into the privileges of the
family of God. Thus shall we look into the face of
Omnipotence as into a father's face. Thus shall we
cling to the hand of Omnipotence as to a father's
hand. Thus shall we move at last into the dark secret
of Omnipotence confident that when that secret of the
dark is solved, it shall reveal the sweet, unfathomable
tenderness of the heart of God.

AMEN.

XXVII.

THE SIN OF CEASING TO PRAY

SCRIPTURE READING
I Samuel XII: 19—25

HYMN

FROM EVERY STORMY WIND THAT BLOWS

FROM EVERY stormy wind that blows,
From every swelling tide of woes,
There is a calm, a sure retreat—
'Tis found beneath the mercy-seat.

*There is a place where Jesus sheds
The oil of gladness on our heads,—
A place of all on earth most sweet;
It is the blood-bought mercy-seat.*

*There is a scene where spirits blend,
Where friend holds fellowship with friend;
Though sundered far, by faith they meet
Around one common mercy-seat.*

*There, there on eagle wings we soar,
And sin and sense molest no more,
And heaven comes down our souls to greet,
And glory crowns the mercy-seat.*

THE SIN OF CEASING TO PRAY

THE MESSAGE

Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.—I SAMUEL XII: 23.

A DIFFERENT SORT of sin, is it not? We usually think of sin as doing something. We "commit" sin. Here is described a sin of not doing—of ceasing to do. The ritual has it correctly when it affirms: "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done", and the simple language of the poem utters great truth:

"It's not the thing we have done, my dear,
Its the thing we have left undone,
That gives us a bit of heartache
At the setting of the sun."

Sharing this Hour of Prayer are many who lead sheltered lives. Young lady, your humbler sister is out this morning meeting the brunt of things in the world of business. You on the beautiful hills of Berkeley, of Piedmont, look out upon the many cities merging together. A multitude of souls today are in the maelstrom of temptation. Your lives are shielded, protected. Why then speak to you about sin? Does the plant in the conservatory need to be warned of blizzard or of tempest? Aye, my sister, your life before God may also be unworthy. Yours may be the *sin of ceasing*: The sin of ceasing to work, the sin

of ceasing to give, the sin of ceasing to sacrifice, the sin of ceasing to love, the sin of ceasing to pray.

"Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you".

And why speak of it as "sin"? First, because prayer is a clear command of God. This, in a peculiar fashion, the new Testament emphasizes: "Enter into thy closet and when thou hast shut thy door, pray . ." "Men ought always to pray and not to faint." "Pray without ceasing." "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." And above all, the life of Jesus was one glorious exposition of the significance of prayer in the economy of God.

Prayer is converse with God, and converse with God or man is the medium by which personal relationships are established. When the converse of the home circle flags, when evening after evening reveals the broken family group, when each finds greater satisfaction in the society of diverse comradeships than in the society of the hearthstone, then may we conclude that the home ties are slackening. When husband and wife no longer share each others inmost secrets but seek for other confidants, then something is beginning to slip. When the letters from the absent boy become

few and far between, then be assured that home influences are being supplanted by other influences. When the Christian neglects the place of prayer, when the Bible is pushed aside for the flaring magazine, the hymnal is put away on top of the piano to make room for the latest jazz, and the Sunday theatre takes the place of the sanctuary, when the weekly prayer meeting is relegated to the anachronisms of ancient days, and personal converse with God has become perfunctory or is given up altogether, then may we recognize a powerless, insulated soul—a life that has become a thing of the earth, earthy. Pray without ceasing, my comrades! Follow the footsteps of Jesus, the Man of Prayer. “Men ought always to pray and not to faint.”

“God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you”. What is this? Does it mean that when we cease to pray we are retarding the purposes of God? Does it mean that God possesses the wealth, that we are God’s executives and that the capital stock in our spiritual enterprises we must obtain directly from God through prayer? Does it mean that the magnitude of our tasks is the magnitude of our prayers? Does it mean that not only are we waiting upon God but that God is waiting upon us? Does it mean that not only are we dependent upon God but

that God is dependent upon us? And further, does it imply that there are forces beyond our understanding which are set in motion when the life of man makes contact with the life of God? That when the contacts cease these radial forces cease? God forbid that I should defeat the beneficent purposes of God toward you by ceasing to pray for you—is that what it means? I am not sure; but I am sure that if every child of God in America knew the dynamic of prevailing prayer, the boastful and polluting paganism which stalks through our land would slink away in defeated shame and the kingdom of God would become among us a radiant reality. O my friends, as Samuel avowed concerning Israel, so let us pledge ourselves concerning our own America: "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you".

The sin of ceasing to pray: Will you note, secondly that those who most need prayer are least able to pray for themselves? We must do the praying for them. For them our prayers must come to the rescue.

Today in the home of one of the Fellowship of Prayer is a crippled lad. He was not always crippled. In his early normal life he shared the activities of childhood; but with the years the malady was growing

upon him which brought him at last to abject helplessness. There in his wheel chair he sits this morning: hands that cannot move, feet that cannot walk. But it is as beautiful as it is pathetic to observe how that home rallies to its helpless member. There are other hands which function for him, other feet are swift in service. And in many a home of the Fellowship of Prayer there are members more sadly crippled. The faculties of the soul are prostrate. The light of vision is gone out; the voice of prayer dumb, the disease of sin has left the sad life marred and helpless. That man is a spiritual cripple. He is unable to help himself. If salvation reaches that man it must be brought through agencies outside of himself. Who will become a voice for the voiceless? Who will suffer for the callous? Who will pray for the prayerless? "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you".

Near the channel through which the great Atlantic flows in to fill the harbor of Port Antonio, stands the Titchfield Hotel. One day on the lawn of that hotel a group stood looking out upon the waves. A boy had essayed to swim his horse across to Navy Island, and about a hundred yards from the shore had slipped off the animal's bare back into the water. He was a very

poor swimmer, and I was told afterwards that for long minutes that little black head could be seen bobbing about, and now and then could be heard a gurgling cry for help. Yet there stood the group on the green lawn. Not a hand was raised to help him until the blue waves hid the tragedy.

In this city of Oakland are beautiful lives going down into ultimate despair. Oh could we see as God sees: could we see with that divine illumination which sent the Man of Sorrows struggling up to Calvary, I think a new earnestness would lay hold of us. O disciples of Jesus, in the name of the Saviour of mankind, on to the rescue! Agonize for the redemption of your age! Catch at all costs the passion of the prophet: "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you".

I can hardly be called a mystic. I wish more of the mystic were in my make-up, for while we climb painfully through sense perceptions or processes of logic to some alluring height, the mystic discarding our laborious plodding, spreads pinions upward and flies with singing to the heights. I am hardly a mystic; but as I grow older, this element of mysticism seems to be impressing itself upon me; namely, that prayer not only "rises" but exerts a "horizontal" influence. Not

only, I am coming to believe, does an inspired prayer—and by that I mean a prayer that involves the very essence and depths of personality—not only does an inspired prayer reach “upward” to touch God; it reaches “outward” to touch man. When thus I pray, is it not true that I am contributing directly to the spiritual resources of my brother’s life? Are the purer thoughts of my prayer shedding themselves like sunbeams into the darkness of my brother’s soul? These are mysteries I shall more fully understand by-and-by. In the meantime, my brother, I shall continue to pray. “God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you”.

The sin of ceasing to pray: for, closing, I remind you that in proportion as we relinquish the mediatorial prayer life, in such proportion does the beauty of the blessed Jesus depart from the soul of us. Mother, as you continue to pray for that wandering girl, your own life is being transfigured. Your sighs are being attuned to celestial music, your tears falling are more beautiful than pearls. Because “his visage was marred more than any man”, therefore is Jesus “fairest among ten thousand and altogether lovely.” Minister, my brother, when you and I know more of the midnight anguish of mediatorial prayer, then will

men and women more clearly discern in us the glory which was Christ's. God save us all from the sin of ceasing to pray!

Master, we cease to pray because we cease to believe. Whether or not we make our requests known unto thee, things seem to take their ordered course. We cease to pray because we cease to be interested. The world holds us with its transient interests. The garish lights blind us to thy stars. The noises of earth deafen us to the anthems of the choir invisible. We grasp the gaudy bubbles of time and relinquish the eternal prize. We cease to pray because we cease to love. We are not anxious for the sweetness of thy presence. We do not yearn to speak with God. We do not experience a mediatorial passion for our fellow-man. We leave him alone with his sin; we relinquish him in the helplessness of his pain. Lord, teach us to pray. Reveal to us our own heart; reveal to us the heart of our brother; reveal to us the heart of God. Help us to become mediators between God and those whom God has brought into such close and tender contact with us.

For these loving human associations we thank thee. We may not possess the mighty imagination to bear

THE SIN OF CEASING TO PRAY

the whole world in our thought at the hour of prayer; but teach us to pray for those who are near to us. Our human circle may be a very small circle—a brother, a husband, a child, a friend. Beyond that circle may be for us a bewildering hinterland. There we cannot pray intelligently, for we are among strangers. But we thank thee for the little circle of our loves. Dear Father, let us pray for them. We love them. Did not Jesus will for those nearest to him that they should be with him in his glory? Father, we also yearn to meet these loves of ours when the morning breaks. Thou also dost yearn for them. Help us then to dedicate to them and to thee the potency of our prayer. Here at this Hour of Prayer love will join the beautiful avowal: “God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.”

AMEN.

XXVIII.

THE DIVINE ALCHEMY

SCRIPTURE READING
Romans VIII: 24—28

HYMN

MY JESUS, AS THOU WILT

*MY JESUS, as thou wilt!
O may thy will be mine!
Into thy hand of love
I would my all resign;
Through sorrow, or through joy,
Conduct me as thine own,
And help me still to say,
My Lord, thy will be done!*

*My Jesus, as thou wilt!
Though seen through many a tear,
Let not my star of hope
Grow dim or disappear;
Since thou on earth hast wept,
And sorrowed oft alone,
If I must weep with thee,
My Lord, thy will be done!*

THE DIVINE ALCHEMY

THE MESSAGE

All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.—ROMANS VIII: 28.

HERE IS A passage that challenges faith. To accept it with all its implications would transmute our sorrows into songs, cause rivulets to ripple along life's arid highways, provide strength to endure the untoward enigmas of life confident in an ultimate and radiant beneficence. "All things work together for good"—God give us faith to live in that conviction.

Let me present a few arresting ideas implicit in the passage:

First of all I observe that the life quality of the subject is to be the deciding element. That is to say, the man who endures the experience becomes himself the prime factor in deciding whether that experience shall function for good or ill in his life. "All things work together for good to *them that love God*".

What do I mean? I mean that the same experience which lifts one soul to heaven will drag another soul to hell. Some are crying for a change of experience, when what they really need is a change of heart. Somewhere I ran across these lines—I hope I quote them correctly—

"Some ships sail east, and some sail west,
By the selfsame winds that blow;
'Tis the set of the sail and not the gale
That determines which way they go.
Like the winds of the sea are the forces of fate
As we voyage along through life,
'Tis the set of the soul that determines the goal,
And not the storm or the strife."

Aye, I have seen sorrow embitter one life and sweeten another; I have seen temptation destroy one life and strengthen another; I have seen injustice and unkindness engender petulancy in one life and patience in another. The human personality suggests the old philosopher's stone which was supposed to transmute the baser metals into pure gold. Transmuted within a man's soul, that which was sorrow becomes a psalm; discord becomes harmony; pain becomes patience; disappointment, hope; death, life—"to them that love God".

I am again arrested by the suggestion of universality. "All things". Saint Paul does not carefully sort out the items of experience and say, These are the happenings which make for life's betterment and these for life's debasement. No! "*All things* work together for good".

The *bad* things? Yes. Are we sure that all of the things we call "bad" are indeed bad? Some of the seemingly bad things may carry hidden in themselves

elements of goodness. I was a guest some time ago at the United States Mint in San Francisco. I saw there gold of every kind and character. Large pieces, small pieces, dust; new gold fresh from the mines, old gold with clustering memories, gold mixed with earth and dross. In fact, the very murk of the floors, the workmen's old shoes and overalls were reduced to pulp, and thrown into the caldrons with all the rest, there to pass through the mysterious actions and reactions of anode and cathode. I will not take you through the complicated sequences, but I will bid you stand with me at last where the dies are rising and falling and observe that out of the caldrons has come the pure yellow metal stamped with the emblems of the national currency. And I say to you that a myriad of experiences which appear only dross, carry in them God's pure gold which ultimately purified, will come forth stamped with the insignia of heaven to become the currency of life.

So much for the "bad" things. And what of the "good" things? My friends, an evil heart may spoil God's best. God's gift of wealth may work out a life's debasement. That is so frequently exhibited as to need no comment. Power without spiritual poise is a peril. Social influence without sanctity becomes a

menace. Even joy may become a cloying, rancid thing. It is the personality which ultimately colors and projects the experience. "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose."

But again I am arrested by the suggestion of co-ordination. They "work together"—these items of experience good and bad. Standing isolated, things may by themselves be evil, but brought into relationship with other things, like sunshine and shadow, like winter and summer, like dearth and rainfall, like mountain height and ocean depth—they work together for good.

A very, very homely illustration permit me. I think back to my old grandmother with her plum-cakes. In those distant days what a reputation the plum-cakes of that old lady held. For miles and miles around, her plum-cakes must grace every cardinal festive occasion. And can you imagine a hungry boy's reaction? . . . Those plum-cake periods used to consume an entire day and monopolize a whole room. Once again I can visualize the various ingredients spread around. There was the pile of flour white as snow, and the bowl of butter, and the spices, and the dozens of fresh eggs, and the currants and the extract

of rose, and the sugar—and all the rest. Now you might turn a boy loose in that room, and apart from plucking at a plum or dabbling in the sugar bowl, the ingredients would be perfectly safe. The raw eggs were not attractive nor was the flour nor the cinnamon, nor the butter. But when all those ingredients were brought together in their perfect proportions and baked until the room grew rich in odors, and then frosted and “sanded” with vari-colored sugar crystals, and topped off with a massive piece of granite candy—glory!

Is the illustration trivial? Perhaps. But O friends, get my serious thought: “All things work together for good”. Under the providence of God, life’s diverse ingredients may work together to richest consummations. The background without the picture would be a smear upon the canvas. But when all the varied hues and tints blend together, something of loveliness appears. The minor strain, the accidental, the tremolo, the trumpet, the cymbal’s crash—none of these in itself could satisfy. But brought together they “work together” to produce the overture. So on the canvas of life all the colors blend into the final and beauteous picture. So in the music of life all the diverse strains blend at last into a blessed symphony.

Am I clear? Just one application. A great pain

is yours. The blow strikes hard. You reel under the impact. Is that "good"? Perhaps not in itself. But that pain draws to you a wealth of human sympathy. Friends you never thought existed overwhelm you with their kindness. Your own heart in turn pours out its wealth of tenderness and gratitude. The whole human world becomes for you a more sacred thing. The words of Richard Watson Gilder break upon you with new meaning:

"Wherever are tears and sighs,
Wherever are children's eyes,
Where man greets man as brother,
Or loves as himself another—
Christ lives!"

Abruptly I leave my thought with you. "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose." And the closing words must provide a meditation of their own. "To them that are called according to his purpose." The Curriculum of Experience—our lives being shaped through experience to achieve the ultimate "purpose" to which God has "called" those lives.

Lord, increase our faith! The wintry storms we see, the enveloping snowflakes. Teach us to forecast the violets rising from the softened sod of spring. The weariness of the sowing time we feel—the long hours

of the sweltering day. Cheer our hearts, O God with preludes from the songs of harvest home. We are terrorized by the earthquake shock, when the firm-set earth heaves beneath our feet like billows of the unstable sea. Show us thy new continents being urged upward from the deeps to the dawn. We cry out in dismay to behold the cross on which purity and love and truth and goodness are slaughtered until the very sun is night. Teach us to see against the background of that bewildering tragedy the glory of thy great apocalypse. God help us to see that no evil can befall a child of God. Help us to see that a defeated Christian would mean a defeated God. Help us to believe that all the mingling skeins woven into the fabric of destiny are absolutely in the grasp of Providence; and while we concentrate upon the solitary crimson thread or gray, God is working with all to produce some beauteous pattern.

Help us to get the mighty sweep of the apostle's vision and have confidence that the entire outworking of all cosmic forces tends toward a great beneficence. Teach us also that God has fitted the individual experiences of his children into this tremendous scheme. Master, send us from this Hour of Prayer with renewed conviction that "All things work to-

gether for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose."

And Master, keep that "purpose" before us. May we remember that each life incarnates a thought of God. May we remember that not only is every life projected for a purpose but that the environment in which the Heavenly Father places that life will somehow help to shape it toward the accomplishment of that purpose here or hereafter. Give us faith in thy perfect love, and give us the quietness which arises out of confidence in that love. In Jesus' name we ask.

AMEN.

XXIX.
THESE THREE

SCRIPTURE READING

I Corinthians XIII

HYMN

WHEN THE MISTS HAVE ROLLED AWAY

WHEN THE MISTS have rolled in splendor
From the beauty of the hills,
And the sunlight falls in gladness
On the river and the rills:
We recall our Father's promise
In the rainbow of the spray:
We shall know each other better
When the mists have rolled away.

Oft we tread the path before us
With a weary, burdened heart;
Oft we toil amid the shadows,
And our fields are far apart;
But the Saviour's "Come, ye blessed,"
All our labor will repay,
When we gather in the morning
Where the mists have rolled away.

We shall come with joy and gladness,
We shall gather 'round the throne;
Face to face with those who love us,
We shall know as we are known:
And the song of our redemption
Shall resound through endless day,
When the shadows have departed
And the mists have rolled away.

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THE MESSAGE

Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.—I CORINTHIANS XIII: 13.

VERILY, ONE of Paul's most powerful passages. What a climax! To read the entire thirteenth chapter and indeed the one preceding it is to feel raging about you a sort of divine tempest. Wreckage flies on every hand. At the end you find yourself amid the litter and debris of everything popular life holds dear. But there stands the great Apostle triumphantly revealing those values unshaken by the shock. "But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

Changing the figure, Paul seems to unroll from the casket three magnificent gems. Faith, Hope, Love—these three. And then, like a blood-red ruby he lifts one aloft for supreme admiration. "The greatest of these is Love!" Why?

My old minister used to say, Because love is eternal, while faith and hope are merely temporary processes which end when their objectives are attained. *Only* love abides. No, cries Saint Paul. You are wrong. Faith and hope are as eternal as love. "Now *abideth* faith, hope, love—these three".

The permanence of faith: at first that thought is depressing. Is it not our confidence that some day we

shall cease to walk by faith?—That some day we shall throw away the torches which have brought us through the night and stand in the full blaze of the eternal dawn? Do not the great hymns teach us so?—

‘Not now but in the coming years,
It may be in the better land,
We’ll read the meaning of our tears,
And then, ah then, we’ll understand.”

Or the hymn of the morning:—

“When the mists have rolled in splendor
From the beauty of the hills,
And the sunlight falls in gladness
On the rivers and the rills”——

And all the implications which radiate from that jubilant hymn. Also when dealing with this theme have not the great preachers risen to their climaxes? Cries Dr. Talmage: “In the light that pours from the throne no dark mystery can live. Things now utterly inscrutable will be illumined as plainly as though the answer were written on the jasper wall, or sounded in the temple anthem.” In one respect Talmage is right, in another wrong. For now *abideth* faith—always—always need of faith.

Do I mean that our present enigmas will forever remain unsolved? Far from it! I mean rather that new and vaster enigmas will present themselves. “Herein is the righteousness of God revealed *from faith to*

faith, as it is written, the just shall live by faith." In college did I not push on from faith to faith? As a preparatory student did I not have my problems? Did not every text book enfold its mysteries? When I solved those lesser mysteries was I through? Rather was I not ushered into vaster mysteries? Here is a boy on an Ohio hillside. He is gazing up at the stars. Behind the brighter stars are glimmering lights which suggest remoter stars. There the hinterland of faith. That boy goes to college. He stands behind a small telescope. The dim stars come clearly into view. His faith is lost in sight. But is that an end of faith? No. Other and remoter hinterlands of light are beckoning. Again—faith. That boy enters his post-graduate course. He is sent to the great Yerkes Observatory. He is looking through the mighty telescope. Again his faith is lost in sight. There in that vast dome does he throw away his faith forever? No. Again new and vaster hinterlands of light are luring. And with each new quest a bigger self is born. "Now abideth faith" . . . God be thanked! For the day that faith passes that day existence becomes a drab monotony and the growth of the human soul must cease.

But Paul says that hope also abides. Is not this even more depressing? Are we not told that "hope

long deferred maketh the heart sick"? Must we then hope on forever? Must we go chasing rainbows through eternity? Will we not achieve our hopes one of God's days?

I believe it most certainly—if our hopes are at harmony with God's will. But new and larger hopes will come, thank God! Retrace the course of your own life. Go back to childhood and strive to reconstruct the hopes of those early years. What do you find? You find, my friend, a great number of those far-away hopes realized and forgotten. You find a great many of them voluntarily relinquished. You find others outgrown like the knickerbockers and the toys. You find others cast aside as unworthy of you. Well, sir, have you then ceased to hope? There is hardly a reasonable hope of my childhood I could not this day bring to pass if I so desired. But I do not so desire. Such things belong to the paraphernalia of immaturity. What then? Have we ceased to hope? Far from it. Maturer judgments have evolved new hopes. Larger horizons mean transcendent objectives. Great souls carry at last within them nations and continents and centuries of time. Was it not Livingstone who flung to savage wilds his dying prophesy: "The Cross turns not back! . . . Africa shall be redeemed"? And on

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into the eternities hope must move. Co-existent with life itself is hope. In a very real sense, "While there is life there is hope."

Yet amid all this changing and transcending one thing remains, broadening, deepening, surrounding, suffusing life like a sacred atmosphere. Love! "Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love."

Yes, my faith and my hope have constantly shifted to new objectives, and like yours, will continue to shift as the soul of us expands. But there are loves in our lives today as abiding as eternity. Tombstones may crumble, epitaphs be obliterated, biographies be forgotten, but love lives on co-eval with life. Its only change is like the broadening of the day, from glory to glory.

Just a minute more. I cannot yet relinquish my thought. Look at this boy. Farmer boy off to college. Old folks left at home. His world begins to change. His childhood faith is metamorphosed. A new faith is his. His early hopes give way to other and more splendid hopes. Years roll on. The farmer lad has achieved a career in the mighty city. His name is a household word across the continent. Five and forty winters have shed their snows upon him when again

his footsteps turn toward the old homestead. And now the old folks at the wicket gate. Mother—father—boy—can you see them? And as the light fades from that tableau our hearts seem to be singing:

“And now he is come to man’s estate, grown stalwart in body and strong;
And you’d hardly know that he was the lad you lulled with your slumber-song.
The years have altered the form and the life, but his heart is unchanged by time;
And still he is ever your boy as of old, O little Mother o’ mine!”

God! what would this world be without love? A blasted wilderness. What would eternity be without love? Hell. But blessed be God!—“Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.”

Father in heaven, are we not told “he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love”? If we are thy children help us to reflect thy nature: help us to love.

“Lord, it is my chief complaint,
That my love is cold and faint;
Yet I praise thee and adore,
O for grace to love thee more!”

We thank thee, Master, for the love of Christ shed abroad in our hearts by thy blessed Spirit. We thank thee that through him we know something of that

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sacred passion which sent the Christ from Manger to Cross. We thank thee that we have learned to love the world as Jesus loved the world. We thank thee for the sweet comradeship of a common Christian fraternity. We thank thee that we love the brethren. Above all we thank thee that we love thee. Thou knowest that we love thee. O Master, accept the tribute of our love. Our faith may be at fault. Thou wilt assist us to a finer faith. Our hope a thing of sad puerility. Thou wilt bring our energies to focus upon hopes more worthy of thee. But, Father, our love—thou wilt not despise the love of even the child-heart. We are thy children. We love thee. O for grace to love thee more, and more, and more, until transfigured by that love we move at last into the ecstasy of that eternal life where God is all in all. In Jesus' name,

AMEN.

XXX.

GODWARD GRAVITATION

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm LXV

HYMN

O THOU THAT HEAREST PRAYER

O THOU THAT hearest prayer,
Attend our humble cry,
And let thy servants share
Thy blessing from on high:
We plead the promise of thy word;
Grant us thy Holy Spirit, Lord.

If earthly parents hear
Their children when they cry;
If they, with love sincere,
Their varied wants supply,—
Much more wilt thou thy love display,
And answer when thy children pray.

Our heavenly Father, thou;
We, children of thy grace;
O let thy Spirit now
Descend and fill the place:
So shall we feel the heavenly flame,
And all unite to praise thy name.

GODWARD GRAVITATION

THE MESSAGE

O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.—PSALM LXV: 2.

I INTERPRET THE PSALMIST to mean that because the heart of God is responsive to the heart of man, therefore shall there continue to be a beaten footpath to the eternal throne. "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come."

And thousands of years after those words were written the great psychologist and philosopher of Harvard expressed the same thought, namely; that merely a scientific conception of impersonal Cosmic Process can never satisfy the religious cravings of the human soul; nor yet the concept of a Stream of Tendency which deals with men *en masse*. Personal religion must draw vitality from contacts between the individual soul and an objective MORE. In other words, soul and Oversoul—man and God. Otherwise the religious craving remains forever unsatisfied; man remains an "infant crying in the night, an infant crying for the Light." Personal communion with a personal God—this is life's supreme quest. "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come."

Is it not so? For a moment let us linger with this thought.

To meet life's spiritual need, the sense of *cosmic*

magnitudes will not avail. A few months ago I stood behind the telescope at the Chabot Observatory and looked to where the planets spin and far off universes surge through the abysmal depths of space. Turning away with weary vision I thought: If this be the ultimate in the universe, then would my soul leave it all for the little circle of my home. More welcome the light of love than the radiance of stars. More satisfying the tiny world within four walls than immeasurable magnitudes where not one human heartbeat responds to my own.

Nor will mere *Omnipotence* avail. They tell me that that geologist gave me a wrong interpretation of the Grand Canyon when, looking out upon it, he described the Titan forces which tore the hills asunder and wrenched the rocks apart. Be that as it may, if blind, immeasurable force sufficient to wrench the stars from their orbits and hurl them blazing to oblivion—if this be the ultimate thing in creation then would I in a humble cottage across the sea find something more to be desired in the music of a mother's faltering voice and the clasp of a hand that trembles in my own.

Nor will *Wisdom* revealed in the scheme of things suffice. Looking through the microscope in the biological laboratory one is awed by the marvels which

swim before his eyes. The mind shudders on the brink of wonders as one might shudder on the edge of a precipice dropping sheer without an observed limit. But turning away with bewildered mind I have said to myself: Is this a cynical Impersonal Splendor, blindly building only to destroy? A mere Cosmic Robot mechanically teleological, meticulously precise? If so, I have more satisfaction turning my back upon the paraphernalia of the laboratory and sitting with my friend in the campus twilight beneath the golden foliage of the autumn maples and listening to the language of his human heart.

Was not that the poignancy of Matthew Arnold's Dover Beach?—

"Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and of flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night."

From this deadening impersonality the psalmist's soul wings free: "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come."

You will ask then, and you will expect a categorical answer of me: "Do you believe that God hears

prayer? 'O thou that *hearest prayer*'—do you believe that?"

Unhesitatingly I answer, "Yes, I do!"

If there were no answered prayers, prayers would cease. Year after year, century after century, millennium after millennium, men of all races, of all languages, of all stages of intellectual development—and of all varied concepts of God—continue to pray. If there were no validity to prayer, prayer would be extinct in a generation. Sophisticated, we lose confidence in the myth of Santa Claus. We retain the institution as a pleasant sentiment. Christian prayer is an exercise vastly different. "He that cometh to God must believe"—two things: "He that cometh to God must believe *that he is*, and that he *is the rewarder* of them that diligently seek him." You cannot keep multiplied millions of men moving for multiplied millenniums toward a mythical Objective. Friends, in prayer you are dealing with a supreme Reality. "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come."

The little planet may not discern the shrouded far-off star. Nevertheless it feels a gravity that grips. My soul has never looked upon the face of God, but my soul has felt within itself the grip of the gravity of God.

But you say, "Doctor Phillips, tell us plainly, do you believe in answered prayer?" Plainly and simply I reply, "I do!" How many prayers of my own have been answered in the unrecognized ways of God's mysterious providence I do not know; but I can point to three definite, almost overwhelming answers to prayer. I called. He answered. Three in thirty years—a small percentage I grant you. But why say "three"? Three thousand might not tell the number. My entire Christian life is one tremendous answered prayer. Only, those three outstanding incidents have been granted me to confirm my faith in sight. With such a background doubt in the validity of prayer forever disappears. *One* would have been sufficient. One valid coin establishes the existence of a national currency. Because of these experiences more readily do I obey my Master's mandate: "Pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." That I believe explains the Godward gravitation of our human world. Prayers have been answered, therefore men have faith that prayer will be answered. "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come."

But this is not the only test of the validity of prayer. In the act of prayer my soul is conscious of

being caught up and carried along in harmony with an Eternal Purpose.

May I explain? Twenty-seven years ago I worked as a minor employe in a northern Ohio factory. Ten hours a day was the schedule; fifteen cents an hour was the wage. In those far days I was very much alone. Hardly a friend did I possess. I had hoped for better things in that institution. I had even met the president personally when first I started to work. But I had sunk completely out of sight. I had become lost amid the crowd. Merely a sense of honesty and duty made me give my best. What was the use? Who knew? Who cared? What held the future? I was on the verge of giving it all up.

One day a white-collared office boy stood by me: "You are wanted at the office." I was ushered into the private office of the vice president. "Phillips, we have been watching your work and want to express our appreciation." For an hour I remained. I was to become head of my department. I was to receive an adequate salary. I must therefore know more about the general program of the institution.

Leaving that interview I found myself no longer in a mechanical and impersonal atmosphere. My life was part of a great scheme. I was working out in my

sphere a portion of a coherent plan. Could my own will, my own desires, my own requests always be granted? Not at all. Once for instance, I remember how big a plan I worked out. And it was a splendid one. But I saw it dashed to pieces. Why? Because it did not harmonize with the totality. Yet I enjoyed my work, and in it I had peace. For faith had come. And in proportion as I believed in my chief and sought "his presence"—in such proportion did my task become a song.

"O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come." It is in the secret of thy presence that loneliness, and drudgery, and heartache, and mystery, and uncertainty are swept away and one humbly submits to the mighty program of the will of God. "GOD WILLS IT".—That suffices.

And we thank thee, Lord Jesus, that thou hast bidden us come. Did'st thou not call to thyself thy disciples of yore—

"Come, tell me all that ye have said and done,
Your victories and failures, hopes and fears,
I know how hardly souls are wooed and won;
My choicest wreaths are always wet with tears.

Then, fresh from converse with your Lord, return
And work till daylight softens into even;
The brief hours are not lost in which ye learn
More of your Master and his rest in heaven."

We thank thee that thou dost *hear* prayer. Some-

times greater than the answer to our prayer is our craving that thou mightest only hear. Our yearning is just to speak with thee. And because thou art so tender to listen, we will speak. "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come."

But Master, for those who have no sense of thee we pray. They tell us that they "cry aloud, and their only answer is the echo of their wailing cry." Father, increase the faith of these! Father, illuminate the vision of these! Father, energize the persistence of these! Teach them that men ought always to pray and not to faint. May the prayers of them involve objectives so worthy, that the imperiousness of the urge within may hold them unfalteringly to the quest. The gold is yet to be found. The secret waiteth to be solved. Beyond the weary night dawn breaks.

"O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come"! We come! We leave the burden of our prayer in the radiance of thy presence. And at thy bidding we depart in peace.

AMEN.

XXXI

THE GARISH DAY

SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah VI: 1—8

HYMN

STILL, STILL WITH THEE

STILL, STILL WITH Thee, *when purple morning
breaketh,*

*When the bird waketh, and the shadows flee;
Fairer than morning, lovelier than the daylight,
Dawns the sweet consciousness, I am with Thee.*

*Alone with Thee, amid the mystic shadows,
The solemn hush of nature newly born;
Alone with Thee, in breathless adoration,
In the calm dew and freshness of the morn.*

*When sinks the soul, subdued by toil, to slumber,
Its closing eye looks up to Thee in prayer;
Sweet the repose beneath Thy wings o'ershading,
But sweeter still, to wake and find Thee there.*

*So shall it be at last, in that bright morning,
When the soul waketh, and life's shadows flee;
Oh, in that hour, fairer than daylight dawning,
Shall rise the glorious thought, I am with Thee!*

THE GARISH DAY

THE MESSAGE

When I awake, I am still with thee.—PSALM CXXXIX: 18

FRIENDS OF THE Fellowship of Prayer, I am not at present binding myself to an exegesis. I am presenting through the medium of this text, an aspect of life which every one who listens in will understand. And may I illustrate my thought with an incident which will at first seem trivial, but which will make clear my thought?

Soon after a certain spring vacation at college the Glee Club put on one of its sparkling entertainments. They were an irrepressible group, and now as their faces that night in Recital Hall, come back to me, I am sobered by the sense of life's underlying pathos. Those boys are now, many of them, men of gray hairs and wrinkled foreheads. But I can recall them youthful as they were that evening. The outstanding "hit" of the evening was a song by one of their number. He sang in effect: The spring vacation was on, the seminary rules were suspended, and oh the wonderful walks he had with his fair co-ed along romantic "Lovers' Lane!" At that point the chorus burst in:

"But I was dreaming, only dreaming,
I was dreaming—that was all!"

Also he had received a letter from his father. Wonderful letter! It had told him how anxious that

parent was that he should conserve his strength. College life came but once. Father's college life had been drudgery and hardship. He wanted to make it easier for his boy. Enclosed was a check for four hundred dollars. Again the chorus came singing:

"But I was dreaming, only dreaming,
I was dreaming—that was all!"

With jubilant heart he had gone to examination. Long before the scheduled hour he had handed in his papers, and the next day received a bright one-hundred, while he listened to his professor proclaiming his eulogy before his class. Again the chorus burst:

"But I was dreaming, only dreaming,
I was dreaming—that was all!"

Dreams! Dreams! Dreams! Look at Jacob. It is midnight beneath the Syrian sky. He is seeing visions. A rainbow ladder rises from earth to heaven, and on this stairway of dreams, angels ascending, angels descending. Morning comes. Jacob awakens. Where is the ladder? Melted like mist. Where are the angels? Gone. What's left? A pile of hard stones—his pillow. O happy psalmist! Are your angels hovering in the dawn? Is the rainbow on your pillow? Does your dream drift on into the day? Yes! It does! It does! "When I awake, I am still with thee"!

Life's most critical periods are often the periods of these awakenings. Grandmother, have you ever had an experience of this sort?—A telegram has brought you to the side of daughter. Great distress has come upon her, and the roof is to be taken from her head. Or it may be a moral tragedy which has shattered the home. Or it may be that death has come. When you arrived a wreath was hanging on the door. Another day and the slow procession moves into the place of silence. Daughter needed you. In great sorrow most of us utter two ultimate names: Mother, and God. You came. The dark night settled. You lay awake thinking—thinking. The gloom in your chamber brightened and it was morning. Quietly you slipped to daughter's bedside. She was sleeping. A sunbeam played upon her pillow. And as you looked she smiled. She was dreaming—dreaming dreams of joy. And you must waken her to grim reality! Oh how it broke your heart to waken her!

Look at Elijah, a defeated man in the wilderness. A price is on his head. He is a forsaken man—a fugitive from his countrymen. He is a frustrated man. He has seen his structure of the years crumble about his head. He reaches the juniper-tree. He falls upon the sod. In sheer exhaustion he sleeps. The merciful curtain of oblivion falls over his senses. Sleep

on Elijah—sleep!

Friends, there are in the Bible, momentary glimpses which melt the heart with tenderness toward God. There sleeps Elijah. The sun is rising now. The man must be awakened to meet the cruel day. Does God care? Is it nothing to the Almighty that this life is broken in his service? Now look! An angel has encamped beneath the Juniper. God plays the role of a servant to his servant. Upon a fire of glowing coals the morning meal is ready: A touch is on the sleeper's brow. He awakens to look into an angel's face.

Friend, did you ever waken to find an angel at your bedside. Did he bring you strength for the journey of the day? Inspiration to meet its cruel impacts? "When I awake, I am still with thee"—do you know the meaning of that word?

Or shall we take the pathos of Longfellow's Slave's Dream? Did you ever feel its poignancy?

"Beside the ungathered rice he lay,
His sickle in his hand;
His breast was bare, his matted hair
Was buried in the sand.
Again, in the mist and shadow of sleep,
He saw his Native Land.
Wide through the landscape of his dreams
The lordly Niger flowed;
Beneath the palm-trees on the plain
Once more a king he strode;
And heard the tinkling caravans
Descend the mountain road."

THE GARISH DAY

He saw once more his dark-eyed queen
Among her children stand;
They clasped his neck, they kissed his cheeks,
They held him by the hand!—
A tear burst from the sleeper's lids
And fell into the sand."

Awaken him? No. Longfellow shows consummate art when he extends that dream into eternity:

"He did not feel the driver's whip,
Nor the burning heat of day;
For Death had illumined the Land of Sleep,
And his lifeless body lay
A worn-out fetter, that the soul
Had broken and thrown away!"

I am in these pictures trying to portray the shock when the soul awakens to reality. Take this young couple. They have been lovers. Through all the stages of romance they have ascended to the marriage altar. On their wedding trip they have travelled long and far. But now it is over. They have settled down to reality. The endless plodding of the years has commenced. Husband started to work this morning, and the young wife finds herself with all the necessary cares and drudgeries and self-denials which are inevitably a part of the domestic round. There does romance perish or does it rise in triumph? Here is the young Christian in the first flush of a wonderful Christian experience. The other day such a Christian said to me: "The greatest thing that ever came into my life is the church. I have now been a Christian a

year, and it is the happiest year of my life." And I said, "Yes, my sister; but some day some cruel actualities will confront you. You will find not all Christians are worthy of the name. You will find insincerity and prayerlessness among the members of the church. You will find forces assailing your soul outside the church. There will come moments of dark discouragement. Then will your life give way? Then will you lose contact with God?" This morning at the Hour of Prayer we prayed for that Christian woman. We prayed that when the inevitable awakening comes she might have strength to make the fine avowal: "When I awake, I am still with thee."

For after all, a dynamic Christian life embodies just these two things: First, vision. How could we go on did we never feel the inspiration of great dreams? Sometimes the periods of my life most profitable to my church have been those periods when I have been farthest away from it. In mid-ocean thoughts burned within my soul. Twelve thousand feet high in the Rocky Mountains I projected plans. Great thoughts of God are vital.

But after the dream of God the soul must find the dynamic presence of God in its struggle toward accomplishment. For God knows the translation of

the vision into life is not an easy process; and he who revealed to us the radiant thing must not withdraw when dawns the day of effort. Then, "Lo, God is here!" must be the keynote. "When I awake, I am still with thee."

Father in heaven, for souls awakening to life's stern reality, we pray this morning. For those who thought of life's battle in terms of pageantry and fanfare, but have awakened to find it a thing of loneliness and weariness and wounds and night. For those who thought of thy service as something meteoric and spectacular, who started out to kindle the world with the fires of their own spiritual zeal but have found the world apathetic and glacial. For those who have conceived of prayer as bringing instant and miraculous response, but have waited wearily beneath an unspeaking sky. For those who had hoped to triumph by love, but whose love has elicited only the frenzied shout of "Crucify him! Crucify him!" For the young whose poetic inexperience is dissipating in the hot realism of the garish day—for all, our Father, who are emerging from the kindly world of dreams into the cruel world of actualities, we lift our hearts in prayer.

And we thank thee that though the dream of God

is gone, the fact of God remains. That in this world of pitiless sunlight there are values to be achieved, quests to be consummated. Help us to realize that the visions which have come impose upon us the mandate to realize those visions in the endless round of human endeavor. Did'st thou not command thy servant Moses to fashion the items of his sanctuary according to the pattern which thou did'st reveal upon the Mount? O may we possess the mountain of mysticism and when we come down to the weary plain of drab actuality, may we fashion upon it a sanctuary of life radiant with our dreams of God.

God of our visions be thou the God of our tasks! God of our ideals be thou the God of our labors! Leave us not when the shock of stern reality awakens us! Leave us not when the day breaketh! Grant us faith to join in the psalmist's exultation: "When I awake, I am still with thee."

AMEN.

Afterword

Dear Reader: Again we have reached the "Afterword". I have experienced great joy in preparing for you, a few of the little talks which during recent months I have given over KTAB to the friends of the Fellowship of Prayer. I had hoped to include a good many more of these: "Waiting for Jesus", "The Olive Trees and the Candelabra", "The Belated Guest"—these and others requested by many I had hoped to include. But the pages of Volume II are already nearly filled, and I must save the few remaining for one final meditation dedicated to those who have passed into the Perfect Day.

All that was said in the Afterword of Volume I might be repeated here; with the additional statement that few addresses in that first volume called forth more touching appreciation than the last: "Through the Shadows into Light". To be frank, I never expected to make this sort of postlude a constant feature of the succeeding volumes of The Hour of Prayer. So sincere, however, have been the requests

AFTERWORD

which have come that this feature promises to be permanent.

In the last twelve months how many of the Fellowship of Prayer have passed! This very afternoon I shall be standing by the recumbent form of one whom I had never seen in life, but whom all of us in the Radio Church Office have learned to love. Her letters were always so precious, her sacrifices for the work were so constant and unstinted. Incidentally the words which follow are the very ones I shall speak in that solemn hour. Yesterday I received a telephone call. A lady wanted to speak with me. I found her alone at home. Husband was away at his office. Twelve years ago three of them had come from Boston—father, mother, son. The young man had made a brilliant record at the University of California, and had won for himself a year of post-graduate work at a technical school in the East. There he had contracted tuberculosis, and returned home to die. Seldom have I seen more poignant grief than was that mother's. Through her sobs she told me how morning after morning that young man shared the Hour of Prayer; how he looked forward to it Then—the end, and now loneliness. Across the room I noticed a familiar object: the little book "The Hour of Prayer".

She told me how much it had meant to her. Words she spoke too sacred to make public. And then she picked up the volume. By chance it opened at the Afterword. "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for thou art with me". And between those pages was the picture of her boy.

Before presenting my final thought may I express the hope that you also, dear reader, even if far removed from the range of our radio, will through the medium of this little volume, become one of the Fellowship of Prayer; and that with the years our circle will continue to grow? We may never meet each other, but—

"There is a spot where spirits blend,
Where friend holds fellowship with friend,
Though sundered far, by faith they meet
Around one common mercy seat."

To the memory of all our Fellowship who this year have passed into THE DAWN, the meditation to follow is affectionately dedicated.

XXXII.

THE DAWN

SCRIPTURE READING
Revelation XXI: 1—7

HYMN
WHEN ON MY DAY OF LIFE

When on my day of life the night is falling,
And, in the winds from unsunned spaces blown,
I hear far voices out of darkness calling
My feet to paths unknown.

Thou who hast made my home of life so pleasant,
Leave not its tenant when its walls decay;
O Love Divine, O Helper ever present,
Be Thou my strength and stay!

Be near me when all else is from me drifting—
Earth, sky, home's pictures, days of shade and shine,
And kindly faces to my own uplifting
The love which answers mine.

I have but Thee, my Father, let Thy spirit
Be with me then to comfort and uphold;
No branch of palm, no robe or crown I merit,
Or street of shining gold.

Suffice it if,—my good and ill unreckoned,
And both forgiven through Thy abounding grace—
I find myself by hands familiar beckoned
Unto my fitting place.

Some humble door among Thy many mansions,
Some sheltering shade where sin and striving cease,
And flows forever through heaven's green expansions
The river of Thy peace.

There from the music round about me stealing,
I fain would learn the new and holy song,
And find at last, beneath Thy trees of healing
The life for which I long.

THE DAWN

THE MESSAGE

And there shall be no night there.—REVELATION XXII:5

MY FRIENDS, I have just quoted for you a beautiful hymn by our own Whittier. That hymn is one of the two most precious to me; and let me here express the hope that when others are rendering to me the same tender service which we today are rendering our friend, the words of this hymn will be spoken or sung to declare my final faith, my final hope, my final prayer:

“There, from the music round about me stealing,
I fain would learn the new and holy song,
And find at last, beneath Thy trees of healing
The life for which I long.”

That entire hymn comes nearer expressing my Dream of Paradise than anything I have read anywhere.

You also have your Dream of Paradise. This, our present world is many worlds in one, and each of us strives to find his own harmonious sphere. “The life for which I long” in this world may be something very different from the life for which you long. *This* world is many worlds in one. *That* world must also be many worlds in one. Each of us has his Dream of Paradise. John had his dream. It was a wondrous vision. The pages of his Revelation blaze with glory. He sweeps from his New Jerusalem every inauspicious thing. “And there shall in no wise enter into it any-

thing that defileth". "There shall be no more pain". "No more curse". "No more sighing". "No more death". "No more tears".—No more!—No more!—No more!—No more! The dross has left the gold. The stain of sin has vanished from the white vesture of the saints' perfection. In fact, John seems to embody all elements of imperfection in the idea of darkness, and cleanses his celestial universe with one sweeping passage: "There shall be no night there".

At first I must confess the statement is rather unwelcome; for who contemns the night? Thank God for night—beautiful night. Night on the plains, night in the mountains, night on the desert, night on the solemn sea; night sprinkled with stars, night drenched with moonbeams. Do we not appreciatively sing:

"Joy is like restless day, but peace divine
Like quiet night"?

Harsh indeed a nightless universe. How then exclaims this man of vision: "There shall be no night there"?

The answer is plain. John is using the term "night" to represent certain inauspicious aspects of human experience which terminate when the Christian's earth existence ends. According to him the dear one who lies here has not passed from day into the night but has journeyed through the darkness to the

dawn. For "there shall be no night there".

Night then may be considered as a period of portent. The first time this passage came vividly to my thought was during the Ohio floods of 1913. I was then minister in Hamilton, Ohio, and from the streets of that city exactly forty-seven men, women and children had gathered to the second story of the church while steadily without the cruel torrents rose. Such a night! Three of us were keeping the watch while the rest had fallen into troubled sleep. I looked outside. The city was in total darkness, and through the darkness came sounds which appalled. Grating along the street, a house was being swept into the deeper water, and just then the church itself seemed to be giving way. I wonder if those two men, Scudder and Jones, who kept the watch with me that night are living now? We stood calmly in the presence of grim Death. There were sleeping mothers, little children folded in their arms, old women, old men, maidens—all. Where would the daybreak find us? It was then I looked toward the communion table where a candle flickered faintly, while in my soul the scripture spoke: "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light."

In this particular chapter of human existence these

checkered experiences are ours. They are not eternal. They do their work; they pass. We leave them behind. For God's children they have no place in the world to come; for "there shall be no night there". Faith may be eternal; thank God doubt is not eternal. Hope may be eternal; thank God fear is not eternal. Love may be eternal; thank God love's anguish is not eternal. With this life portent passes. No more to hold an unopened telegram with trembling hand; no more with blanched cheek to hear a physician's verdict; no more to shudder at the headlines of the morning's paper. Gone the spectral fears of night—forever gone; for "there shall be no night there".

And night is the period of bewilderment. Then vision is distorted. How differently things appear at midnight and at dawn! Do you know that some of the most beautiful spots on earth are most terrible at midnight? Stand in the Royal Gorge at midnight: the weird sounds that punctuate the terrible silence, the awful shades that fall from the beetling cliffs, the inky river moaning through cold rocks.—But in the morning! Then the river runs like liquid light, then the dewy rocks are shimmering, and the pines upon the opposing mountains anthem their matins. Or the Grand Canyon: Stand at midnight in the depth of

that abyss where the cruel rapids of the Colorado shriek toward the sea—stand there where every falling stone, every wild beast's cry is taken up and shouted back from precipice to precipice in never-ending echoes—stand there where every angry rock impends to crush you. Is it not terrible? But in the morning—! Then you are standing in a holy city filled with sacred spires of amethyst and chrysolite, and jasper and essonite and alexandrite and topaz. For beloved, it is dawn, and "there shall be no night there".

Shall I declare my conviction? I believe that some of the darkest, seemingly most cruel experiences of earth, will flash with celestial glory when we behold them in the morning. Then I shall see why my father died leaving a widowed mother with seven children to face loneliness and hardship. Then I shall see why my college friend, Ralph Quick, struggling through years of intellectual effort was cut off almost on his day of graduation; then I shall see the meaning of my Saviour's Golgotha; for "there shall be no night there".

And night is the period of pain. All physical and mental pain make league with night. Is it sorrow, my friend? When midnight comes is it not worse? Then do not the sardonic demons surround you? Is it

disease? When vitality is at its midnight ebb—then do we not know torments? Do you know what it is to count off the ticking of the clock, to listen to the hours dragging by with leaden footsteps, to watch longingly for the first faint light along the edges of the blinds?—Do you know that experience? One of my own dear members had endured long months of suffering. A little while before her passing I called to see her. As she spoke to me she was even then in much suffering. Said she: “Pastor, I am never free from pain; but in the daytime it is easier to bear. Friends call to see me, husband is always near me, through my window I can get little glimpses of the outside; I can hear the children playing on the street; sometimes I almost forget the pain. But when night comes—my God!” Seldom have I heard more agony packed into two words.—“My God!” Bending tenderly over her, I whispered: “Sister, ‘there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever!’ ”

A few hours more and her free spirit had passed into the Dawn. . . .

While, therefore, the shock of this parting fills you with sorrow, grieve not, my friends, as those who have

no hope. Rather take comfort that this dear one has entered a richer, fuller life. And let us all press on in the confidence of faith to those blessed surprises God has prepared for those who love him.

Our Father, we leave this dear one embosomed on thy love.

“Peace, perfect peace, our loved ones far away,
In Jesus’ keeping we are safe and they.

Peace, perfect peace, death shadowing us and ours,
Jesus hath vanquished death and all its powers.

It is enough: earth’s struggles soon shall cease,
And Jesus call to heaven’s perfect peace.”

We thank thee that “there shall be no night there”. “Weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning.” In this little group today are those who have suffered much. Show them thine eastern hills on which the dawn is stealing. Strengthen them in faith that the best is on before. O thou God of Goodness, we thank thee that thy best is always kept in store for us. We thank thee that the life of thy children moves on from glory to glory. We thank thee that thy greatest joys are the joys that are “set before” us. And so steadily toward God’s best we move!

“Farewell mortality,

Jesus is mine.

Welcome eternity,

Jesus is mine.

Welcome, ye loved and blest,

Welcome, sweet scenes of rest,

Welcome my Saviour’s breast—

Jesus is mine.

THE HOUR OF PRAYER—KTAB

Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forevermore.

AMEN.

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